



ABOVE: A Bridgend school's public speaking success. (See page 4).

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THURSDAY, MARCH 28TH, 2013

Out and About with The GEM

Pages 14 and 15

COWBRIDGE

SO MUCH TO SEE... Pages 20-23

REFRESH, RENEW, REPAIR...

Page 27



Jogger tried to rescue injured dog Ceri's bravery is honoured with a memorial plaque



ABOVE: Ceri Jones at the Dogs Trust, alongside the memorial plaque with Jo Jo the dog.

A LOCAL woman has been given a commemorative plaque at the Dogs Trust in Court Colman, Bridgend, in recognition of her brave attempt to rescue a fatally injured dog.

Ceri Jones, who lives in Llangan, was out jogging in the Treoes area when she saw that the dog had wandered into a field and had been injured by a horse.

The dog's owner, Christina Davison, told The GEM: "I had taken my two dogs, Jesse and Jo Jo for a walk.

"Jesse was deaf and prone to becoming disorientated. In this case, she suddenly crossed a stream and I was unable to cross it to catch her.

"A horse was in the field and Jesse was injured by its hooves. She didn't get up."

It was at this point that Ceri Jones came upon the scene. Christina said: "I was hysterical and told her what had happened.

"She ran across, without a thought for her own safety, and rescued Jesse.

"Sadly, Jesse was so badly injured that I had to let her go that evening. Had Ceri not been there, Jesse would have died alone in the field.

"Instead, Ceri came to Maes Glas Brackla veterinary practice with me and stayed with me while they examined Jesse. I can never thank her enough for her bravery and kindness in such circumstances."

Christina added: "Linda Feagan at the Dogs Trust has installed a plaque in memory of Jesse and of Ceri's bravery...A fitting memorial."

'Hi, England! We've still got the Cup!'



ABOVE: The under-15s at Kenfig Hill Rugby Club were out in force to see the Six Nations Trophy. For more details and pictures, see page 3. (Photograph by Richard Sims.)

WATCHES AND JEWELLERY STOLEN

POLICE in Bridgend are investigating after a house in Ton Kenfig was burgled between 8am and 4pm on Tuesday, March 26.

A police spokesman said that the thieves got in by smashing a glass panel in a back door.

Among the items stolen was a quantity of jewellery and watches which included:

Dooney and Bourke black hand bag, with tan-coloured straps and

handle; a small black leather purse; a Rotary watch with a black leather strap; Armani watch with brown leather strap with a square face; a DKNY watch with a red face and red strap; a gold and ruby ring in the shape of a flower; a white and gold ring set with diamonds in the middle; a gold and emerald ring with diamonds in the band; an old gold wedding ring;

an old gold engagement ring with an inset diamond; various items of costume jewellery and an i-Pod.

Detective Constable Phil Coulston of Bridgend CID said: We are appealing for any information regarding this burglary. There will have been some noise when the glass door panel was smashed.

"We want to hear from anyone who may have been in the area

during the day on Tuesday and who may have seen anyone behaving suspiciously or any unusual vehicles.

"In addition, if you have been offered any of the stolen items, please contact us."

DC Coulston can be contacted at Bridgend CID on 01656 679518, on 101, or call Crimestoppers (free and anonymously) on 0800 555111.

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CARDIFF AIRPORT BOUGHT BY WELSH GOVERNMENT

As The GEM was going to press, it was announced that the Welsh Government had bought Cardiff Airport at a reported cost of £52 million.

The news met with a mixed reaction. Vale AM Jane Hutt was enthusiastic, saying: "By taking the airport into public ownership, the Welsh Government can integrate it into its wider economic strategy and boost prospects for Welsh citizens, tourists, businesses and the aviation industry - particularly the British Airways Maintenance Centre."

However, the Leader of the Welsh Conservatives, Andrew RT Davies, described it as a "nationalisation" and said: "Many people will be amazed that they are able to find £52 million under the mattress, having spent two years since the start of the fourth Assembly moaning about not having enough money from the Westminster Government."

The Welsh Government has said it will not run the airport, but will seek a commercial operator to do so.

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Coping with vertigo on a nuclear submarine during defence 'tour' of Scotland

I SPENT a week in Scotland that seemed dominated by ladders, trains and tackling my vertigo.

The Defence Select Committee went to Scotland as part of an inquiry into the implications for Scotland, and the defence of the UK, of a Yes vote in the independence referendum.

It was a hectic visit to critical infrastructure and development sites. We started with Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde also known as Faslane and then on to the Royal Navy Armaments depot at Culporth.

The two bases sit in parallel lochs which open out into the sea. Faslane is in Gare Loch

and Culporth in Loch Long. The countryside is beautiful and I was delighted to find myself passing the banks of Loch Lomond on the way to the bases.

I was not prepared for the size of the bases, 6,500 civilians and service personnel are employed at Faslane alone.

I met my first set of challenges when faced with climbing down the vertical ladders into HMS Vigilant one of our four Vanguard class strategic deterrent nuclear submarines.

I suffer from vertigo and I have to admit that the first step out into the open hole in the deck to climb down into what seemed a never ending ladder I had to grip my fear and keep going.

Not an enjoyable experience but well worth it.

WESTMINSTER NOTEBOOK

Bridgend MP MADELEINE MOON writes an exclusive column from Westminster for The GEM.



reience but well worth it.

The nuclear deterrent submarines in Faslane are accompanied by conventionally armed but nuclear powered submarines, a fleet of mine hunter vessels and a detachment of Royal Marines. I met HMS Athelstone one of our mine hunters on patrol in the Gulf during a recent visit to discuss NATO's engagement there.

Our mine hunter capability is widely admired and ensures the oil leaving the Gulf, which is critical to keeping Europe working, flows freely.

A few miles away in Scotstoun is the shipyard building the new HMS Duncan our newest type 45 destroyer. More ladders to negotiate to see the most high quality workmanship as this ship draws near to completion. Higher standards of sleeping and recreational facilities for the crew were also clearly visible.

A train journey from Glasgow to Edinburgh prepared us for the next impressive visit, to Rosyth dockyards, to see the new Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier.

The length of five

rugby pitches and the height of a nineteen storey building this is an amazing piece of engineering.

Lots of ladders to climb up to the flight deck then down more to see some of the crew's quarters and the most impressive bakery which will provide fresh bread, cakes and biscuits every day for a crew of over 1,000 once the ship is operational.

I wish I had the skill to describe walking along corridors with wiring and pipes hanging from the ceiling, cables snaking across the floor, walls half built and everywhere people working to move the ship forward towards completion.

That evening, one of the control towers was to be lifted onto the flight deck and set in place. At the stern of the ship it was possible to see where units had been slid into place which contained fully fitted sleeping quarters.

The next section of the ship and its two huge rudders sat on the dock side waiting to be fitted over the next two days.

Another train and we headed north to RAF Lossiemouth the home of squadrons of

Typhoon and Tornado jets, an RAF regiment, a search and rescue squadron and the famous 617 Squadron which carried out the historic 'dambusters' raid.

The search and rescue squadron showed us video footage of some of their amazing rescues in high seas and in snow blizzards in the Cairngorms.

After a week of meeting people who use their skills to defend their country, be they electricians, pilots, submariners, welders or soldiers I came back to Bridgend to meet another set of people who served their local community.

Many years ago, David Matthews, our late Director of Education, came up with the idea of Bridgend County Borough Citizenship Awards. The awards will be detailed elsewhere in this paper, but I cannot end this report without mentioning how impressive the awards always are.

People serve in so many ways, from knitting, running sports and youth clubs, to helping to save lives as Coastguards. They are all invaluable roles which deserve recognition and honouring.

Without them, many people's lives would be poorer and the sense of community which we all value would be diminished. It is the way of life our defence forces are there to protect and defend.

Norwegian choir on song for Mayor's visit



ABOVE; Norwegians and Welsh in harmony!

A 45-strong Norwegian choir treated the Mayor of Bridgend county borough to some traditional songs from their homeland during a whistle-stop visit to Wales.

The Sandefjords Sangforening Male Choir called into the Civic Offices in Bridgend to meet the Mayor, Coun Marlene Thomas, and present her with a commemorative pennant.

The Mayor gave them a commemorative crest in return and said: "It was an absolute pleasure to meet the choir and it was great to hear them sing. I understand that some of the group were lucky enough to attend the Wales

v England rugby match, so they were lucky mascots and can definitely come back to Wales again!"

In addition to joining the crowds singing Cwm Rhondda at the Millennium stadium, the choir members visited several tourist attractions across south Wales during their four-day trip and also performed in a special concert at St Mary's Church, Nilton.

The choir's Musical Director, Harald J Stickler, said: "It was an honour for us to sing for the Mayor. This was our first ever trip to Wales as a choir and we have had a great time singing with Welsh male voice choirs. We have been inspired by them and learned a lot about the Welsh style of choir singing."

Golf Club's gift to paramedic is life-saver



THE captain of Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club, Barrie Edwards, is pictured (above) presenting a Porthcawl First Responder John Limbert with a defibrillator, which will enable him to react quickly in a medical emergency.

Speed is essential in such situations and the fact that John, a paramedic, lives locally will be of great benefit.

John is a retired Royal Air Force physical education officer who served between 1974 and 2002 in the Falklands, Hong Kong, Cyprus, Germany, and many NATO alliance countries.

He is a qualified

mountain rescue instructor and during his military career, used his first aid knowledge and skills on those injured, in distress, or experiencing medical trauma in remote mountainous regions.

John recently became a volunteer NHS local Community First Responder (CFR) for Porthcawl and surrounding areas.

The CFR work involves him being contacted by an NHS controller when a 999 emergency call is received, so that he can respond and arrive at the scene of an incident within eight minutes, deal with the casualty in order to preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening, and promote recovery until an NHS ambulance crew arrives.

Hats off to the collectors for Marie Curie appeal!

YOU may have seen the Lions Club of Bridgend out in force in Tesco on Cowbridge Road recently. They were hard to miss in their bright yellow hats!

As part of a long term fundraising partnership, the Lions Club of Bridgend was pleased to present a cheque for a fantastic £1419.49 to Marie Curie Cancer Care.

As well as selling the daffodil badges just in time for St David's Day, Lions Club of Bridgend also donated the proceeds from the sale of refreshments at Bridgend Lions annual Book Fair (held for the 19th year at Bridgend YMCA) to the Marie Curie total.

Marie Curie Cancer Care provides end of life care for terminally ill patients in their own homes or one of their nine hospices.

For more information contact Lions Club of Bridgend via www.bridgendlions.org.uk SH



ABOVE; Mellow yellow appeal.

Did you know you can read your GEM online? bridgend-today.co.uk

Praise for borough council's plan for young people in care

A BRIDGEND county borough council scheme to encourage young people leaving care to continue into higher education has won praise.

The council has been working with care leavers and several universities as part of the 'Reaching Wider' regional partnership, to try and improve educational opportunities.

Now that work has been recognised as best practice by the Welsh Audit Office.

Living independently, financial worries and the availability of year-round student accommodation have been cited as barriers to higher education by many care leavers.

As a result, the council's Looked After Children Education (LACE) team forged links with Cardiff University's Coursework Mentoring Club and the Confident Futures Summer School to offer care leavers the opportunity to experience the university environment in a safe and supported environment, to meet new friends and raise aspirations.

The team have also arranged for several young people to attend a day at Glamorgan

University sampling a range of courses such as drama, animation, music and film-making while others attended an open day held by the South East Wales Reaching Wider Partnership, First Campus, and Newport University, which explained the support available for care leavers in higher education.

Coun Huw David, cabinet member for children and young people, said: "We know that for any young person leaving care, higher education is always going to feel more challenging. That's why it is vital

that we provide looked-after young people with opportunities to continue with their education if they wish to.

"Through this kind of partnership working, we are able to give this important group of young people an insight into what higher education entails and the support available.

"It's really encouraging that a national body like the Wales Audit Office has endorsed what we do."

For more information, contact 01656 815397.

HIGH TIDE TIMES

(UNTIL APRIL 4)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 - 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time		Ht	Time		Ht
	AM	M		PM	M	
28 Thur	06.54	10.2		19.13	10.1	
29 Fri	07.33	10.3		19.54	10.2	
30 Sat	08.11	10.1		20.33	10.0	
31 Sun	09.51	9.8		22.14	9.7	
01 Mon	10.37	9.4		23.00	9.3	
02 Tues	11.24	8.9		23.51	8.7	
03 Wed				12.25	8.2	
04 Thur	00.59	8.2		13.46	7.9	

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should always check with a tide table specific to their location.

Three-year ban for woman driver who jumped a level crossing red light

A MOTORIST who jumped a red light and weaved around the barriers at a level crossing, almost colliding with a pedestrian in the process, has been banned from the road for three years, following a British Transport Police (BTP) investigation.

Patricia Ann King, aged 69, of Brook Vale, Pencoed, denied dangerous driving but was found guilty on March 12, following a trial at Cardiff Crown Court.

King was sentenced to six months imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, and was ordered to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work on behalf of the community. She must also pay £750 prosecution costs and pass an extended driving test on completion of her three-year disqualification.

The court was told that around 11.30am on Friday, March 16 2012, King drove her silver Mercedes A-Class towards Pencoed level crossing on Hendre Road, Pencoed, when the auto-

matic barriers began lowering.

She then overtook a Ford pick-up truck that was waiting at the crossing before weaving through the barriers while the warning lights were flashing and the alarms sounding.

The Mercedes almost struck a pedestrian who was crossing the road on the other side of the track, the court heard. Moments later, two passenger trains went through.

Both occupants of the Ford pick-up were said to be shocked by her actions, with one describing King's driving as "reckless and extremely dangerous – it was total and utter stupidity".

The incident was also witnessed via CCTV by the signalman working at Port Talbot signal box. He later confirmed that Pencoed level crossing was fully operational and in perfect working order on the day in question.

King admitted to being the owner and driver of the silver Mercedes A-Class, adding she was late for an appointment.

PC Dave Miles, the officer in charge of the investigation, said:

"King's actions were reckless and extremely dangerous, and the severity of the sentence shows just how seriously the courts take this type of crime.

"Her driving not only endangered her own life, but also the lives of others – no one more so than the pedestrian she very nearly collided with. Quite clearly, level crossing misuse is just not worth the few seconds you might save.

"We continue to work closely with Network Rail to raise awareness and educate those who use level crossings on the dangers of misuse.

"Level crossings – and other crossings where road, footpaths and rail cross – are designed to keep people safe and, when used correctly, that is exactly what they do.

"However, drivers who willingly flout the law and place themselves and others in danger should be in no doubt that if caught doing so, they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

The young Mules get hold of the Six Nations trophy!

Report and pictures by
RICHARD SIMS

THE juniors at Kenfig Hill RFC did something last Sunday that the might of English rugby couldn't – they got their hands on the Six Nations Trophy.

The club is fortunate to have as president the former Welsh international and current Wales team manager, Alan Phillips.

PICTURE SHOOT!

He arranged to have the trophy brought to the club for the younger members to have their photographs taken with it, following the under-15s match against Nantyllyfyllon.

Last year, Alan brought along the Triple Crown trophy, so in a few years time, when hopefully one or two of these youngsters play for Wales, they will be able to look back with fond memories of the first time that they were photographed with these two trophies.



The Ospreys in reception class with teachers Amy Wittacker and Lorie Wheeler.

OSPREYS' WING IN ON WORLD BOOK DAY...



ABOVE: Porthcawl Primary School Head-teacher, Mr Andrew Wood, welcomes Ospreys Richard Fussell, Tom Grabham, Matthew Dewi and Mike Dyer.

Report and photographs by
KEITH E MORGAN

As part of the party, crashed to Earth.

The children were enthralled with the stories and thrilled to have their pictures taken with the Osprey Team Members after the readings were over.

Pupils from year-4 had already visited the Liberty Stadium, the Ospreys' home at Swansea. This was part of the Ospreys' literacy programme.

Subsequently, pupils of year-4 have been carrying out a work pack based on the literacy programme which is designed to promote good standards of reading and writing.

Residents sign up for green waste scheme

RESIDENTS have been registering in their hundreds for Bridgend County Borough Council's new garden waste recycling scheme ahead of its launch in April.

The new service offers residents the chance to have their dead plants, flowers, weeds, grass, leaves and hedge clippings collected from the kerbside, to be taken away for composting.

Operating during the main growing season until the end of October, householders who want to take part are being supplied with two reusable sacks which will be collected from the kerbside fortnightly on the same day as black bags.

The charge for the service is £27 per household per year. Pensioners will pay a discounted rate of £23.

Inner wheel make-over



PORHCRAW Inner Wheel president Mary Emmett-Lewis welcomed Christene, who gave a demonstration on beauty to the members. Maggie Masson and Mary Morgan were 'willing volunteers'.

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Local schools on top form in public speaking competition

A SCHOOL from Bridgend featured strongly in a recent national public speaking competition.

The aim of the ESU (English-Speaking Union) is to promote the use of the English language throughout the World.

Out of 28 Welsh schools who competed this year, seven reached the Welsh National Final of the union's public speaking competition, which was held in Ty Hywel at the invitation of the Presiding Officer of The National Assembly for Wales, Rosemary Butler AM.

The schools were:- Argoed High; Brynteg Comprehensive; Flynnone House; Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls; Treorchy Comprehensive and Pen y Dre Comprehensive.

Unfortunately, Pen y Dre could not attend due to illness among its team members.

The three judges were: Mrs Muriel Harrison: Dr Norma Lloyd-Nesling and Charles Middleton.

A welcome was given to the schools by Derek W. Morgan, OBE DL, the chairman of ESU S Wales, of Merthyr



ABOVE: Capt Sir Norman Lloyd-Edwards presenting a cup and individual team member certificates to Brynteg Comprehensive School.

REPORT and PHOTOGRAPHS by KEITH E MORGAN.

Mawr, Bridgend.

A trophy and individual team member certificates were presented to each team by Capt. Sir Norman Lloyd-Edwards, the president of ESU S Wales, and the individual awards were presented by Dr Peter Beck, the Lord Lieutenant of South Glamorgan.

The awards were as follows:

Highly commended chairman – Thomas Klee of Barry Comprehensive School.

Highly commended speaker – Thomas Prosser of Brynteg Comprehensive School.

Highly commended questioner – Julia Pearson, Haberdashers' School for Girls.

School for Girls.

The Challenge Shield runners-up were the Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls, while the winners, Treorchy Comprehensive School, were presented with the Fairwood Trust Challenge Shield by Claire Clancy, chief executive and clerk of The National Assembly for Wales.

In his summing up, Derek Morgan commended all the students who had taken part and commented on the lengthy deliberations of the judges, who had a very difficult task, given the very high standard of the presentations.



ABOVE: Dr Peter Beck presenting the highly commended chairman certificate to Thomas Prosser of Brynteg Comprehensive School.

Local superstore joins campaign to tackle undiagnosed diabetes

RIGHT: Bridgend Tesco Extra manager Huw Cowell and Diabetes UK Cymru director Dai Williams



TESCO customers and staff in Bridgend Tesco Extra hope to find some of the 2,993 people in the county borough who have undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes, as part of a major new charity partnership with Diabetes UK Cymru.

As part of the partnership, launched in the Cowbridge Road store on March 21, Tesco and Diabetes UK Cymru will be urging customers to be risk-assessed for Type 2 diabetes.

According to a new analysis carried out by Diabetes UK and Tesco, about 2,993 people in Bridgend county borough are thought to have undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes.

There are already at least 7,500 people living with the condition in the county – 5.64 per cent of the pop-

ulation. Dai Williams, director of Diabetes UK Cymru, said: "We are extremely grateful that Tesco customers and colleagues in Bridgend will be raising thousands of pounds for people affected by, or at risk of diabetes."

"The work they will be doing over the months ahead, will make a real difference – not only because they'll be helping to identify some of the people in the borough with undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes – but also by helping to ensure people get the support and care they need to have the best possible chance of a long and healthy life."

People in Bridgend can find out their risk of Type 2 diabetes by visiting the Tesco pharmacy in store or by going to www.diabetes.org.uk/tesco.

MP welcomes report on internet safety

MADELEINE MOON, MP for the Bridgend constituency, has welcomed the publication of the Internet Watch Foundation's (IWF) annual report on the extent of websites carrying child pornography and internet safety.

The report was supported by a survey which found 80 per cent of people in Wales are concerned about child pornography on the internet, but 40 per cent of those surveyed would not know how to report it if they encountered it.

Mrs Moon said: "As a champion for IWF, I welcome this report and would encourage everyone to report web pages they have concerns about. More information about how to report is available through <http://www.iwf.org.uk/>."

Corridors of power

IT looks as if we are going to get two new nuclear power stations at Hinckley Point, courtesy of EDF, which we know is a French company, so we will again be held to ransom for our electricity bills – nothing changes there.

As they will take ten years to complete, it will not affect me, but I am concerned about my children and grandchildren and the poison legacy across the water.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Should we have wind, or nuclear power? that seems to be the

question of the hour, Nuclear power is the ticking time bomb, that will be a threat long after we are gone, Tidal power is another way, but more expensive, or so they say, The answer could be the Welsh Assembly, all that hot air and it's free, Piped to a turbine in a power station, to supply free electricity for the nation, Or maybe eels kept in a pot, that's bound to make the water hot, Give everyone wind generator machines, supplied monthly with a crate of baked beans. Colin Dudley Barry

Roxy is looking for a home

The GEM is in partnership with the Dog's Trust to find caring homes for animals in their charge at Bridgend Rehoming Centre (Telephone: 01656 725219)

ROXY is a nine-year-old Staffy cross. She is a sweet little girl, who is here through no fault of her own, and is looking for a comfy home with lots of cuddles.

She still enjoys her walks, but likes nothing better than a cuddle on the sofa when she gets home.

She can be a little sensitive at times, and likes to choose her doggy friends, so would need a fun introduction to any dogs she might be living with.

As she would like a quieter home, she would prefer older children.

She has some medical issues, but to ensure Roxy can find a loving home, Dogs Trust is offering to pay for her medical bills related to her heart condition.

If you think you can offer Roxy a home, call 01656 725219, or pop into Dogs Trust, Court Colman, Pen-y-Fai, Bridgend, CF31 4NG.

We have around 70 dogs here at any one time, so if Roxy isn't the one for you, please visit to see if we have your perfect four-legged friend.



LF

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Walkers ignore sub-zero temperatures to support kidney research charity



Coun Mike Clarke prepares to set the walkers on their way.

SUPPORTERS of the Porthcawl branch of Kidney Research Wales were out in force for the annual 'Walk for Life' which starts and finishes at 'The Seagull' public house in Nottage, courtesy of publicans Debbie and Mike Ruck.

Following an introduction by Mrs Jean Schofield, the chairwoman of the Porthcawl branch of the Kidney Wales Foundation, the starting line ribbon was cut by Coun Mike Clarke, deputy mayor of Porthcawl, to set the walkers off.

Leading the field as usual was Alan Williams who is always first to complete the course. There was a very good turnout again this year considering the weather conditions with the temperature below freezing point.

The event was supported by Madeleine Moon, MP for Bridgend, who took part in the walk.

** Report and photo by Keith E Morgan)*

TORY AM SAYS 'COUNCIL MUST GET IT RIGHT THIS TIME' OVER PORTHCAWL ROAD CLOSURE

BRIDGEND County Borough Council (CBC) officers remain confident that their proposals for closing The Portway in Porthcawl and diverting traffic along the Eastern Promenade will not result in traffic chaos on sunny summer weekends.

BCBC made an official

response after the Shadow Welsh Transport Minister Byron Davies, who is a Welsh Conservative regional AM for South Wales West, wrote to council highway chiefs, challenging them over their proposal, which is part of the Porthcawl Regeneration Strategy.

The land occupied by the road is needed to link council-owned land at the Hillsboro Place Car Park and Salt Lake.

The matter was a bone

of contention recently when the Civic Trust lodged an objection to the regeneration plan – but then withdrew it after a storm of protest.

In her reply to Mr Davies, Louise Fradd, corporate director of communications, said that traffic surveys carried out in Porthcawl were deliberately not done during the summer peak period, because those figures would skew the model developed to an unacceptable degree.

Traffic models predict that if The Portway were closed, the Eastern Promenade would carry a flow of 493 vehicles per hour, which is within the capacity of the re-constructed road, which can take up to 1,600 vehicles per hour in each direction.

The letter to Mr Davies adds: "The model indicated that the two junctions affecting the Eastern Promenade will operate effectively with the currently anticipated level of development in Porthcawl."

"The scheme will not cause significant capacity issues on any other part of the network."

Ms Fradd added that the seasonal factor had been covered by consultants who were asked to look at the options to deal with excess demand as a result of tourism and visitors.

Their report identified opportunities to intercept traffic at peak periods and direct it to seasonal

car parks or to park and ride schemes.

She went on: "The survey only identified 10 days a year at which visitor demand peaked. Logically, you would not wish to sacrifice large areas of land near the town centre for the limited periods it would be required for parking."

The letter pointed out that a temporary car park capable of taking 1,000 cars will be provided at Sandy Bay.

This car park will disappear once the new housing planned for the area commences under Phase 2 of the regeneration scheme.

Once this happens, the council intends to divert traffic heading into Porthcawl on peak days into seasonal overflow car parks.

Mr Davies said that he was disappointed that the council had not accepted his suggestion that they commission further traffic surveys into the effects of stopping up The Portway.

He said: "They are satisfied that their traffic modelling is robust and we all have to hope that it is, because if they have made any mistakes, Porthcawl will be blighted in the summer by the sort of traffic jams which used to happen back in the 1960s, before The Portway was built."

"It was put in for the specific purpose of taking through traffic away from the Eastern Promenade at a time when car ownership levels were much lower than they are today."

"My fear still is that Porthcawl's tourism industry will be blighted by gridlock along roads leading to the seaford. And once they have dug up The Portway, it will be an irrevocable step."

"There will be no other way in which a bypass road around this potential bottle neck could be recreated."

"We will be stuck for decades with what the council decides to do today, so there's a big responsibility on them to get it right."

"In many ways, it's a shame that the council's arguments were not tested at a public inquiry into the road scheme. That

would have seen their surveys and modelling put under intense scrutiny by a planning inspector."

"But I know that those of them suffered was disgraceful, given that they were only exercising their democratic rights under the planning process."

"The personal abuse that some of them suffered was disgraceful, given that they were only exercising their democratic rights under the planning process."

"We must hope that those Porthcawl councillors and residents who were so quick to attack them do not live to eat their words because of traffic chaos in the town."

"There is too much at stake here – not least Porthcawl's future as a seaside resort."

However, Labour councillor Alana Davies said: "The whole affair seems like yet another attack on regeneration."

"In Porthcawl, there is always someone trying to stop it, but this time it is going ahead."

"I just wish Byron Davies would come on board and celebrate it."

Coun Gerald Davies, for the Lib-Dems, said: "I am pleased that the

project is going ahead, and I know from experience that no project goes 100 per cent smoothly."

"I am sorry that the two Conservative AMs are going on about 'what might go wrong' even after the civic trust decided not to proceed with an objection."

Coun Sean Asprey told The GEM: "I think that BCBC and the Welsh Government have seriously under-performed as far as Porthcawl is concerned, but this design brief was put together in 2004."

"While I am not 100 per cent happy with it, and think more could be done, we can't afford to wait another 25 years."

"I don't want Porthcawl to look the same in 30 years."

"I believe the civic trust have Porthcawl's interests at heart, but they were out of balance with public opinion on this issue and I don't think they were treated unfairly."

"We have got to look forward. It would be a tragedy if nothing happens in Porthcawl. People don't want to see another 30 years of arguing."

Bridgend Youth Theatre go west to Dylan country

SEASIDE town life in south Wales has changed greatly since the middle of the last century.

What if Dylan Thomas were alive and well and writing about life in a west Wales seaside town today?

What would he make of amusement parks and hen nights, traffic wardens and satellite TV, iPods, jet-skis and mobile phones; a world where a BlackBerry... is no longer a fruit?

Bridgend Youth Theatre (BYT) will be posing these questions when performing *Buggerall*, an updated version of Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, (2pm, April 7) at this year's Laugharne Weekend.

After staging the play to great acclaim last summer at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, the company were invited to perform at the prestigious event alongside Phil Jupitus, Beth Orton and Sir Peter Blake.

BAFTA award winners, It's My Shout Productions, are now the creative brains behind Bridgend Youth Theatre. Described by Prince Charles as, "A wonderful example of what young people can do", their BBC Wales film project has nurtured some of the young writ-

ers, actors, technicians and directors who will now come together for this production.

The director, It's My Shout's Roger Burnell, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to take part in a prestigious festival."

Roger, a resident of Laugharne, was recently made a recipient of the Fellowship of RWCMD at a ceremony that also celebrated the talents of Michael Sheen and Ruth Jones. He has also received a BAFTA Cymru award for special achievement.

The writer, Laugharne-based Jon Tregenna said: "It's very exciting to have such a celebrated and talented group performing *Buggerall* at this year's Laugharne Weekend."

This year's Laugharne Weekend will take place on the weekend of April 5-7.

The line-up also includes Mark Thomas, Caitlin Moran, Tracey Thorn, John Hegley, Mark Watson, Joe Boyd, John Cooper Clarke, Stuart Maconie, Robyn Hitchcock, Jackie Kay, Niall Griffiths, Grace Dent, John Harvey, Mark Billingham, Belinda Bauer, Martin Rowson, John Osborne (John Peel's Shed), Robin Ince, Jemima Dury, The Gentle Good, Pete Brown, Rachel Trezise, Richard James,

Threatmantics.

For tickets or further information visit: www.laugharneweekend.com or call in to Castle Stores, Laugharne (01994) 427616. RT

Bonnets, beanie hats – and a secret ballot!

THERE was a plethora of eggs, chickens, feathers, flowers and Easter bunnies on display at the March meeting of Southerndown WI!

Members had used their many creative skills and taken up the challenge to attend the meeting wearing an Easter bonnet. An assortment of sun hats, wedding hats, gardening hats – and even beanie hats – had been adorned, creating amusement for all.

A secret ballot was held to vote for the best bonnet and Linda's eggshell-covered creation was the outright winner – despite a few shells falling to the floor during the more formal proceedings of the evening.

An Easter egg was the prize although, in the circumstances, a

tube of super glue may have been more appropriate!

The president, Meryl, managed to restore order to guide us through the news from the Glamorgan Federation of WIs.

Discussions were held regarding the National Federation's photographic competition, with its theme of inspirational women and a suggestion was made to hold a croquet evening during the summer months.

Dates of trips will be provided at future meetings. A plan was put in place to introduce small groups to follow specific interests, with the aim of continuing the WI's philosophy of inspiring women.

Suggestions included a book club, water-colour painting and embroidery, among others.

The committee will

aim to schedule events in the coming months and all members will be welcome to attend.

The main area for discussion was the forthcoming Link meeting, when we invite specific local WIs to join us.

Our evening will incorporate a mixture of words and music, with invitations being sent out by the end of March for the meeting that will take place in June.

Tea and coffee were served, along with cakes and savouries, while Olwyn provided a quiz that included some mind-stretching riddles to round off a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

The next meeting will include hands-on flower arranging and will take place on Thursday, April 11, at 7.15 pm in the Church Hall, St Brides Major.

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RESIDENTS HONoured AT BOROUGH MAYOR'S CITIZENSHIP AWARDS 2013

SOME of Bridgend county borough's most remarkable residents have been honoured at the borough Mayor's Citizenship Awards.

Held in the Council Chamber at Civic Offices, Bridgend, the awards ceremony saw individuals and groups recognised for the significant and positive impact they have made in their communities.

Each year, residents are invited to nominate people who have gone the extra mile, whether through their outstanding voluntary work, charity fundraising, or by committing an act of selflessness.

There were 27 awards in total and each winner was presented with a certificate honouring their achievement.

The Mayor of Bridgend County

Borough, Coun Marlene Thomas, who presented the awards, said: "The standard of nominations for the Mayor's Citizenship Awards is always extremely high. This year was no different and we heard about some exceptional people, all of whom are making a real difference for the area they live in. Congratulations to each and every winner."

The Council Leader, Coun Mel Nott, said: "It is always an honour to represent the county borough of Bridgend at the Mayor's Citizenship Awards. This year's winners have all made such a positive impact and I feel confident that their efforts will inspire others to follow in their footsteps."

The full list of winners is as follows:

Individual awards

Helena Charles – awarded for her work in the community over many years, including fundraising efforts with the Dan Y Mynydd

Knitting Club.

Norah Clarke – awarded for her outstanding fundraising work for numerous community organisations, including Porthcawl Boxing Club, Porthcawl YMCA and the Bridgend branch of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Jean Connolly – awarded for her fundraising efforts and dedicated work with the Girl Guides, which has resulted in many girls becoming Queen's Guides and winning Baden Powell awards.

Windsor Davies – awarded for voluntary work in his community as, among other things, chair of Blaengarw and Pontycymer PACT, a committee member of Blaengarw RFC and deputy chair of retired officers in the Army Cadet Force.

Horace Drake – awarded for writing a book about his life, called *Once upon a time in Aberkenfig*, and donating all the proceeds to the Alzheimer's Society.

Alison Elson – awarded for her outstanding work to raise many thousands of pounds for the Welsh Guards Appeal and Help the Heroes.

PCSO Paul Galtry – awarded for doing over and above his role as a PCSO to tackle community issues in Wildmill, resulting in a significant reduction in both crime and anti-social behaviour.

Pat Hewer – awarded for her hard work over 40 years volunteering with the Kenfig Hill Beavers and Cubs.

Vince James – awarded for volunteering as a driver for Sandville and working beyond the call of duty to make a difficult journey for patients into a pleasant and relaxing one.

Allan John – awarded for his dedicated work within Pyle Community Council, as well as his commitment to and knowledge of local rights of way and open spaces.

Brian Johnson – awarded for serving the community since his teens and his devoted work as unpaid community councillor for over 51 years.

Ruth Maxwell – awarded for her commitment and dedication as a key member of the Crossroads board, as well as her work as a member of the Abbeyfield Society and active role in Porthcawl's Fairtrade Group.

Kate Millard – awarded for her unstinting work in the community, including initiating the successful Pencoed Neighbour Hoodies programme, and her efforts to revive the Pencoed

community carnival.

Roy Mordecia – awarded for giving over 40 years' active service to Maesteg Celtic Cricket Club, for encouraging young people into the sport and raising funds for the all-weather play area and practice facilities.

Alan Passey – awarded for his dedicated work since 1951 for the Tondy Robins Football Club, raising money and providing footballing opportunities for thousands of men over the years.

Dennis Pincott – awarded for his exceptional contribution as a member of the Parents' Forum, and for being a strong advocate of the rights of people with learning disabilities and their families.

Ryan Porter – awarded for his volunteering efforts with the Court House Youth Centre in Maesteg, amounting to over 400 hours a year and contributing to the welfare of young people in the community.

David Pugh – awarded for his voluntary work in the community, including chairing the Blaengarw Play Development Group and helping to develop a new park for the community.

Abigail Richards – awarded for supporting Friends of Pencoed through events and raising more than £1,500 in support of Breast Cancer Care.

Annette Stoneham – awarded for her involvement with the Litchard Brownie pack and Coity Rainbows over the last 22 years, and for achieving the Laurel Award for Guiding.

Dale Thomas – awarded for persevering through the difficulties of his medical condition to play sport and for achieving a schoolboy cap for representing Wales at rugby.

Bryan Young – awarded for his contribution to the local community, including singing with Cór Meibon Cwm Garw since 1962 and his support for many national and local charities.

Group awards
Matthew Hibbert and Oliver Tandy.

Awarded for their admirable courage and quick reaction in coming to the rescue of an injured and elderly gentleman.

Roger and Yvonne Hudd.
Awarded for their hard work in raising more than £50,000 for



ABOVE: All the winners in the council chamber at the Civic Offices.



ABOVE: The Mayor and consort with the Porthcawl Coastguards.

local charities through the performances of the Mid Glamorgan Savoyards since 1994.

Llynfi Valley Angling Club.

Awarded for working hard over many years to improve the water quality and ecology of the river, resulting in salmon and sea trout returning for the first time in over 100 years.

Porthcawl coastguards – **John Williams, Simon Hughes and Wayne Purchase.**

Awarded for their work over many years with the Coastguards – their bravery, skills and contribution to the community has benefitted many people and deserves recognition.

Business award
John Williams – awarded for his work alongside colleagues from the Bridgend branch of Lloyds TSB to play an active role in the community, raise funds for local charities and help in the organisation of community events.

(SEE MORE PICTURES ON PAGE 7)



Anette Stoneham with the Mayor and her consort, George



Coun Marlene Thomas with Roger and Yvonne Hudd.



The Mayor with Mrs Helena Charles.



ABOVE: Allan John with his certificate.

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MEET BRIDGEND'S HONOURED CITIZENS



Allan Passey.



Ryan Porter.



The Mayor with Matthew Hibbert and Oliver Tandy.



Award winners (left to right): Dennis Pincott, Kate Millard, Abigail Richards and Alison Elson.

RIGHT: PCSO Paul Galtrey received an award for his work in Wildmill.



Parents urged – 'vaccinate children against measles'

PARENTS in Bridgend county borough are being urged to vaccinate their children against measles following the biggest outbreak of the virus in south Wales in a decade.

BCBC is backing the advice being given by the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board and Public

Health Wales for parents to be fully aware of the situation and get their children vaccinated.

The only protection against the potentially fatal disease is for children to receive two doses of the MMR vaccine, a spokesperson said.

"Well over 300 measles cases have already been reported, with the majority of them in Swansea and

neighbouring Neath Port Talbot, but the disease is increasingly being reported in other areas.

"More than 40 children have been admitted to hospital so far, and with cases virtually doubling each week for the last three weeks, the outbreak shows no sign of slowing down at the moment.

"There is evidence that measles has been spread among children

attending over 100 schools and childcare settings, so there is much potential for the virus to reach Bridgend county borough and local families should take precautions.

"Parents of children up to the age of 18 who haven't been fully vaccinated should contact their GPs immediately for advice and arrange vaccination as soon as possible. Some people, such as very small children under six months old, pregnant women and the immunosuppressed can't have the vaccine themselves.

"The only way to protect these vulnerable family members and friends is to vaccinate the ones around them.

"As there are approximately 8,000 unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children in the area, the outbreak is likely to go on into the summer months," the spokesperson added.

Rotarians are treated to 'medical entertainment'

THE Rotary Club of Bridgend was entertained on Friday, March 22, by Tinnitus, a band of five doctors and a 'pretender' with a first aid certificate!

They first performed in 1990 in local venues such as The Laleston Inn, Wick Village Hall and one (very brief) appearance at the Porthcawl Grand Pavilion, to which they have never been invited back!

They perform mainly for fun, to annoy their audiences and raise money for charity. Two younger members have expanded their repertoire by three new songs, including one written after 1950!

To be serious for a moment, it was a brilliant evening. They presented a random selection of songs, with no



Tinnitus entertaining Bridgend Rotarians.

noticeable theme, two or three of which had not been heard by the evening's audience before.

The purpose of the evening was to raise money for the charity Abesu, which is a Penarth-based charity, supporting the building of a women's commune, with houses and water supply, in Southern Zambia.

Abesu's aim is to

enable the women, who are mainly widowed due to the Aids epidemic, to be self-supporting.

Bridgend Rotary Club is very grateful to Tinnitus for giving up their time to support this worthy cause. It was a most enjoyable evening and they certainly will be asked for a repeat performance.

CARON JONES,
International committee

Hayley's charity quiz boosts Velindre funds

RIGHT: Rachel McCarthy (centre) receives the cheque for Velindre cancer Centre from Hayley Williams.



ON Sunday, March 24, GEM contributor Hayley Williams presented a cheque for £500 to Rachel McCarthy, of Velindre Cancer Hospital in Whitchurch, Cardiff.

The money has been raised from a Sunday evening quiz held at The Swan in Nottage over the last few months.

Hayley hosted the quiz and has developed quite a following on the quiz circuit. She also writes a popular 'Spooky Tales' column for the GEM.

The money has been raised by donations of 10p for an incorrect answer. Hayley thanks all who took part in the quiz and also the volunteers (her husband Andrew, Kay and David Boswell) who collected

the money and dealt out raffle tickets for correct answers over the weeks.

"Thanks also go to regulars at the Swan Inn for their generous donations, Murph for setting up his equipment and to Marion Jones for counting money collected.

"The quiz will continue at The Swan starting at 5.30pm every Sunday for a new charity Ysgol Bryn Castell.

"All are welcome to take part, with no written pages. So you can just come along and join in the fun at any time during the evening," Hayley added.

OPERA IN BAGHDAD

A PERFORMANCE of *An Opera in Baghdad* is to be delivered in Porthcawl by local poet, Robert Minhinick, and Tracy Evans next month.

It concerns a visit Minhinick made to Iraq in 1997, between the first and second Gulf Wars.

"This 'opera' is a lively and very musical dramatic poem", Robert Minhinick explained. "It commemorates some of the extraordinary people I met on the visit".

On April 5, Robert Minhinick and Tracy Evans will perform *An Opera in Baghdad* at the Green Room, Sustainable Wales, James Street Porthcawl. £3. Details on 01656 783962.

Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

Branch Manager Phil Powell feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is steamed up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although

that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a momentary perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole."

Cloudy2Clear service the Vale, Bridgend, RCT and Porthcawl areas and Phil is finding that his

approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've

done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Phil a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!



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Easter in the park

FAMILIES can get involved in an Easter egg hunt around Bryngarw Country Park from 10am – 12pm on March 30 and 31, at Brynmenyn.

Families will follow a map around the park, take part in Easter games, and meet special guests along the way.

Full details online at www.grandpavilion.co.uk or on 01656 815995.

YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Festival Queen
Please note that the choosing of the 2013 Festival Queen and Disco Evening will now be held on Friday April 26, between 6pm and 7.30pm at the Talbot Community Centre, Prince Road, Kenfig Hill and NOT on Friday, April 12, as previously reported.

To enter or get more information regarding the Festival Week, telephone Gina Hooper on 0165 6895504 or 07752 366241.

Mynydd Cynffig Junior School

Deputy headteacher
— Many congratulations to Mr Price, who has been appointed deputy headteacher following an interview at Bryngawr House last week.

Mr Price has been in an acting deputy headteacher role since January 2011.

Pupil of the week — congratulations to the following pupils who were nominated for impressing the staff at the school last week: Thomas Flanagan — class 1, Tegan Bateman — class 2, Leah Knott — class 3, Lexi Thompson

— class 4, Ewan Orchard — class 5, Emmi Joy — class 6 and Eryn-Mae Franklyn, class 7.

The headteacher's award went to the 'Rapid Racers' Formula 1 in Schools Team — Lowri Thomas, Eryn Mae Franklyn, Charlotte Roberts, Oliver Roberts, Amy Ruck and Taryn Matthews.

Special lunch — congratulations also go to the following pupils, who joined Mr Davies for a special lunch last Friday as a reward for their high standard of behaviour, including politeness to both staff and fellow pupils during lunchtimes last week: Megan Rees, Tara Bennett, Mia Lunn, Lowri Powis, Chloe Knott, Leah Knott, Jude Abraham-Jones, Dafydd Jones, Joseph Hardwicke and Joshua Hughes.

Red Nose Day — well done to those pupils who took part in Red Nose Day and raised close to £200, which will be donated to help transform the lives of countless people both in the U.K. and across Africa.

Talent night

The 'Stars in your Eyes' 11th anniversary at the Royal Pub in Kenfig Hill was as spectacular as ever, with

amazing talent producing a brilliant evening of entertainment.

With eight contestants, some doubling up and impersonating two different singers, the audience were entertained by the likes of The Snowman, Elton John, Elkie Brooks, Alanis Morissette, The Pogues, Meatloaf, Louis Armstrong, Chuck Berry and Frank Sinatra.

With so much talent on show, the judges, Kay Evans, Jerrie Beth Downs and Hazel Morgan, had a very difficult task in picking a winner.

After much deliberation they chose Don Morgan's impression of Elkie Brooks performing 'Pearl's a Singer' as the winner, for which he received two tickets for the autumn rugby internationals.

Second place went to Alan John's impression of Elton John singing 'Crocodile Rock' and in third place was Sion David. Lisa Delbridge and Helen Sale as Diana Ross and the Supremes singing 'You Keep Me Hanging On'.

Congratulations to Mark Richards, Steve Oates, Chelsea Richards, Mike Wilson and Gareth Richards whose contributions, with the others, made for a wonderful



COMMUNITY NEWS from KENFIG HILL AND PYLE

by **Richard Sims**

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evening.

With a hamper donated by Andrew Davies from Davies Butchers for the raffle, the evening raised a magnificent £370.

This was rounded up to £400 by Mark and Tina Richards and will be donated to the 'Sandville Self Help Centre'.

Ladies' charity bike ride

Help for Heroes Ladies Cycle Challenge

— At the end of May, a team of local ladies, led by Joanne Davies, will begin a three-day cycle ride from Cardiff Bay to the Horse Guards Parade, London.

The challenge is part of a national event organised by 'Help for Heroes' — a charity that offers comprehensive support to those who have suffered life-changing injuries and illnesses while serving their country.

Joanne had no prob-

lem in recruiting a motivated team of cyclist and supporters, as the cause was inspired by the late Mark Powell, a good friend who is greatly missed.

They will leave Cardiff on Friday, May 31, and travel via Wootton Bassett, Tidworth and then on to Blackheath, arriving on Sunday, June 2.

The team will then meet over 1,000 cyclists from all parts of the UK, and be led on the final stretch of 10 miles by more than 100 wounded Servicemen, women and veterans into central London in what will be the biggest cycling demonstration of national support for the wounded this country has ever seen.

The cyclist taking part in this marathon ride, Elaine Keller, Claire Hiett, Claire Castle, Sarah Phillips, Joanne Davies, Rhiannon Wildman and Nicola Baker, are very committed to their training and despite some not having ridden a bike since they were chil-



ABOVE: The Varsity Dance Crew, led by Josh Murrell (centre, back row).

dren, and juggling with their busy careers and family lives, they are all determined to complete the challenge.

They have a great team of supporters in Gareth Davies, Richard Castle, Josephine Shirley, Ceri Burridge and Nicky Greenway.

They would also like to say a big thank you to the local businesses including the Hi Tide, for their support and to all the individuals for their generous raffle prizes and donations so far.

If anyone would like to contribute to this worthy cause, donations can be made via: <http://www.bmycharity.com/h4hladies-bikechallenge> or with raffle prizes by contact-

ing Nicky on 07789 688447.

Street dance

Street Dancing has become very popular since the 'Diversity' dance group won Britain's Got Talent on TV.

A new group called 'Varsity Dance Crew' was formed just six months ago. The dancers in this group are aged from nine to 13 and come from Kenfig Hill, Porthcawl and Bridgend.

They are led and coached by 16-year-old Josh Murrell, a dancer from Cardiff, who has won many trophies for street dancing.

Although they have only performed for six months, they have recently entered two competitions, gaining a fifth and then second place. Josh said that they are training really hard to try and win the next one they enter.

Josh who is supported in this venture by his mother, Rhiannon, trains with the group

every Saturday morning in the Talbot Community Centre, Kenfig Hill.

They are considering holding open classes for both junior members and their parents. If this is something that would be of interest to you, telephone Rhiannon on 07535 000529.

Kenfig Hill Wellbeing Centre

The activities being held by Mental Health Matters at the Talbot Community Centre, Prince Road, Kenfig Hill on Wednesday, April 3, include a talk by Lawrence Joseph about Want to Work, benefits update from 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm, and photography with Valley & Vale from 2pm to 3pm.

It is a great afternoon when everyone is welcome to go and enjoy themselves in a friendly environment with a cup of coffee and join in the activities.

Charity's call for volunteers

VOLUNTEERS are being sought in the Maesteg area to help a young people's charity.

Supported by Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), the project is housed in the former Court House in Maesteg, where a range of services for young people and young families between the ages of 11–25 are provided.

They include a family centre, crèche, health visitors, parenting classes, street dance team, music classes, youth club sessions and open house activities including darts, pool and games evenings.

Volunteers are needed in the evenings at the Court House to work alongside young people in various activities.

All youth work volunteers will receive support and supervision from qualified youth workers and have the opportunity to gain youth work qualifications.

The charity also needs volunteers to become members of the board of directors, helping to shape the future of the organisation by providing direction, guidance and governance.

For further details, call BAVO's volunteer centre on 01656 810400 or email bavo@bavo.org.uk.

Delegates support for people with Asperger's

MORE than 100 delegates from Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot county boroughs recently gathered in Margam Orangery to attend the 'A Conference', to raise awareness and challenge attitudes surrounding Asperger's Syndrome.

Delivered as part of the Big Lottery-funded Siaradwn Ni – Let's Talk programme, the conference was the fourth of five co-ordinated by Mental Health Matters Wales.

Through a variety of key note speakers, who provided thought-provoking presentations, delegates from the voluntary and statutory sectors were urged to shift from complacency and consider how they could change their behaviour and working practices to ensure that people with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism, were fully supported both professionally and emotionally.

Janette Kearn, chief executive of Mental Health Matters Wales, reported: "The conference's aim was to raise awareness of how mental health issues can develop for people diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and to positively change attitudes.

"Feedback from delegates evidence

the success of this. We were fortunate to have such excellent speakers to help us achieve this aim."

The Siaradwn Ni – Let's Talk programme is co-ordinated by Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service.

It is funded to support people who are suffering from depression, anxiety, low self-esteem or self-harming, reduces barriers to accessing support, provides training, promotes positive emotional wellbeing and works towards reducing the stigma attached to mental health issues.

Stuart Burge Jones, Siaradwn Ni programme manager, said: "We particularly welcomed the conference's theme on Asperger's awareness. It's well known that people with Asperger's or Autism can face increased stress, greater difficulty in relationships and managing their own emotions.

"The inability to communicate feelings of disturbance, anxiety or distress, can mean that it is very difficult to diagnose depressive or anxiety states until the illness is well developed. These factors alone can cause a high suicide risk."

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YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Brackla chorus
BRACKLA
Community Chorus has welcomed three new members, Caroline Jones, Pam Hills and Val Mosedale, into the alto section of the choir.

The members would also like to congratulate 'dark horse' Beverley Podd on her recent marriage to David Harries. The choir was unaware this event was taking place until the last moment and wish the couple many happy and healthy years together.

Members also welcome back Margaret Dunlop, who has been absent for a few months, following operations on her legs.

The choir hopes she is now fully recovered and will soon settle back into the alto section, where she had been sorely missed.

The choir is fortunate in having an outstanding musical director, Gillian Ridout, who has also been appointed musical director of Pencoed Silver Band, where she has been a member of the percussion section.

She is a music teacher in Rhondda Cynon Taf and is the percussionist with that area's orchestra.

The choir rehearses at Brackla Community Centre on Wednesdays from 7pm to 9 pm, where visitors and new members are welcome. Because of Easter holidays, there will be no rehearsal until April 10.

Pen-y-Fai WI
PRESIDENT Jean Griffiths opened the recent meeting of the Pen-y-Fai Women's Institute, and introduced the speaker for the evening, Carolyn Campbell, of Top Notch Hat Hire, who gave an interesting talk on the different styles of ladies' hats from the 1940s until present times.

She gave the members a number of interesting tips on what they should look out for when choosing a suitable hat. Carolyn had brought 30 different hats with her and she encouraged members to try on as many as they wished.

Chris Phillips proposed a vote of thanks, and then Jean Griffiths gave birthday greetings to members who were celebrating during the month.

NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM:

If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me.

I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: **CLIVE MITCHELL**

1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ

TEL: 01656 725399

email: tynycoed1@yahoo.co.uk



and then Jean Griffiths gave birthday greetings to members who were celebrating during the month.

Chris Phillips then gave a talk on the number of walks different sections of the WI had taken part in to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Glamorgan Federation.

She reminded members of the Link event, which Pen-y-Fai WI

had organised at the new Archbishop Mc Grath Roman Catholic secondary school in Brackla.

She hoped all members would attend and support the Link group which would involve Victorian ladies.

Sue Davies and Jill Owens gave a brief account of a silver jewellery-making course they had attended at Denman College.

There was also an Easter bonnet competition and president Jean Griffiths proved a worthy winner.

The next meeting of the Pen-y-Fai WI will be on April 15 at 7 pm in the primary school hall; new members are welcome to come along. School awards

The following pupils at Tynyrheol primary school, whose reading skills had improved the most during the school term, received books donated by friends of the school for their efforts.

Sam Whitefield received Disney's 'Ultimate Family Treasury' of classic stories to enjoy together; Jak Lewis received the 'First Children's Encyclopaedia' a first reference book for young readers. and Thomas Sage received the 'Children's Illustrated internet linked Encyclopaedia', giving hundreds of links to safe home-work-helpful websites.

Two concerts
Côr Merched Cwm Llynfi (Llynfi Valley ladies choir) recently performed at two local concerts.

They first entertained members of the Good Neighbours Club in the Masonic Hall, Brackla, and it was so appreciated by the audience that the choir has been invited to perform at the same event next year.

They also had a successful concert performing with Côr Meibion Maesteg a'r

Cylch (Maesteg and District male choir) on St David's day at the Celtic club, Garth - where both choirs hold their rehearsals.

The audience especially appreciated the wonderful sound as both choirs sang together renowned composer Arwel Hughes' hymn 'Tydi a Roddaist'.

The choir rehearses at the club on Wednesday evenings from 7pm where new members will be made welcome; or phone 01656 733581.

Carers' centre
Bridgend Carers' Centre at 87, Park Street, Bridgend, CF31 4AZ (tel 01656 658479) is a welcoming venue for all.

Please note the centre is closed this Friday (March 29) and (Monday, April 1) for Easter.

On April 2, the Outreach group will be at the Princess of Wales hospital.

At the centre on the same day, the parent carers' consultation group will be meeting at 10.30 am, with light refreshments being provided between 1pm-3pm.

The community café will be open on April 3 at the centre between 12.30pm-3.30pm.

On April 4, there will be an outreach group

at Velindre hospital, Cardiff, from 9.30 am-12.30 pm; also at Trinity Church Hall, Porthcawl, from 10am to 12 noon. From 1pm to 2pm, carers can take part in light exercises in Darija's 'Body Blitz' at the centre. Phone the above number to book a place.

Baby Splash Time
To celebrate its first year running swimming pools and leisure centres in Bridgend county borough, Halo Leisure is inviting local babies who will be one-year-old this year, to join in a free 'splash time' on April 6-7 at the following baths: April 6: Bridgend Recreation Centre from 5.30-7.15 pm; and Pyle swimming pool, April 7: Tynyrheol primary school 3.30pm-4.30 pm; Nysawdre swimming pool April 7, from 2pm-2.45 pm; Maesteg swimming pool, 3pm-3.45 pm; and Pencoed swimming pool between 3.30pm-4.30 pm.

There will also be a soft play toddler party at Maesteg sports centre on April 7, from 10.30 am-7 pm. Tondur Primary School's Easter bonnet parades was taking place at the Heol Persondy building today at 9.30 am, and the Meadow Street building at 2.30 pm.

'Get on board Crossrail link' - MP urges

MADELEINE MOON, MP for Bridgend, is encouraging local small and medium sized business to register to be part of the supply chain for Crossrail.

Mrs Moon recently attended a briefing on the project and how businesses in the Bridgend constituency may be able to benefit.

"Crossrail will create a rail link between east and west London with the construction of 42km of tunnels under the city. It is the largest public works project in Europe," she pointed out.

"The main contracts for

Crossrail have been distributed under a process known as Tier 1. However, there are a significant opportunities within the supply chains of these contracts for small and medium sized businesses across the UK to be part of the project and I would like to encourage Bridgend based businesses to get involved.

"Crossrail are using a system called CompeteFor. Businesses can register online via www.competefor.com and provide a profile of what they can offer.

"The system can then match businesses with possible contracts. All Tier 1 contractors for

Crossrail will be obligated to advertise contracts through CompeteFor.

"The opportunities are diverse, ranging from catering to consultancy and it is hoped that this will disperse the economic benefits of the project outside of London," the MP added.

Further information about registration is available through www.competefor.com. Additional details of Crossrail's procurement policy and procedures are available through www.crossrail.co.uk/supply.



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Drink wisely poster wins award for local students

AT an award ceremony hosted by Jane Hutt AM in the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay, pupils from across south Wales were awarded prizes for posters they had designed, highlighting the importance of learning how to drink wisely.

This was part of the Soroptimists' regional project supported by the regional president, Pam Allison, of Barry Soroptimists.

The winners of the secondary school category were Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School sixth formers Katie Winton and Tara Gulwell.

The AM commented: "The winners designed excellent posters, which will have a huge influence on young people, with the top award going to Tara Gulwell. The poster will be laminated and 1,000 copies will be sent to schools in Wales with a very effective message for all generations to be 'Alcohol-wise.' Congratulations to all those who took part and to the Soroptimists for mounting this important project."



Jackie Memory, head of sixth form, Kate Winton and Tara Gulwell, pictured with Jane Hutt.

Team Elis wins 'Do You Dare?'

ON Saturday (March 23) Team Elis, made up of Alun Williams, Catherine Hunt and Andrea and Pete Gardner, took part in Ty Hafan's "Do you Dare?" challenge in Dare Valley Park, Aberdare.

The team had to endure a two-mile mountain run, blind rock climbing, canoe relay, memory test and tyre flipping to win. All they had to do was be the quickest team to com-

plete all events. Team Elis made it over the finishing line first - in freezing conditions and six inches of snow. They took part in the event as a 'thank you' to the Ty Hafan children's hospice at Sully, for caring for Elis, Alun's baby daughter, who was born with Charge Syndrome, and sadly passed away in March 2010, when she was just 16 months old.

If anyone would like to donate, go to justgiving.com/teamelis

TALES FROM THE VALE The Mabsant was a colourful occasion

THIS article is taken from the book 'The Vale of Glamorgan, Scenes and Tales among the Welsh', and the explanatory notes are by Angharad Wynne.

The observations were made in the early 1800s by an anonymous Welshman, who was known to lawyers in Lincoln's Inn, London.

He was described as "a tall, solitary old gentleman who visited his native Vale of Glamorgan every long vacation".

His notebook was published in book form in 1839 after his death, and is still available.

THE MABSANT Every llan or parish in Wales once celebrated its own Mabsant or Saint day.

While it was based on church tradition, its celebrations latterly took on a colourful and very secular nature. The author of the notebook describes local Glamorganshire occasions:

"The Mabsant is the celebration of the holiday of the tutelary Saint of the village, after whom the church and the place are generally called, and is an occasion of great gaiety in the villages of our neighborhood. Profuse is the finery then displayed by

the country maidens, and many the arts they practice to captivate the attentions of the rustics. The chief amusement is dancing; but it is, beside, a time of great carousing, - of ball-playing, and sometimes fights and uproar."

He goes on to relate in some detail an occasion of the Llantwit Mabsant, which would have been dedicated to St Illtyd and probably celebrated around his feast day of 6 November.

"The evening entertainment for such occasions usually took the form of a Noson Lawen, a mixture of Welsh folk singing, harp playing, music making and dance. In this instance, the evening begins with a harper who is noted as playing the old Welsh air 'Ar hyd y nos'. Later, the dance begins in the 'church-loft', which in the times of the Lords Marchers, was a place for holding courts of law."

This building is today known as Llantwit Major's old Town Hall. He paints a picture of young courting couples dancing sprightly, watched, and occasionally joined, by other rustics and some of "better

degree". Beer was provided, and sweethearts, resting from the dance would share a mug. He tells how a couple of old women sold gingerbread from baskets; "These wily crones passed along from one to the other of them as they sat on benches, complimenting the vain girls on the prettiness of their dress, or of their persons, and the young men on their good dancing; and this coaxed the simple-hearted creatures into a purchase....Great was the delight of the rustic lovers at treating their sweethearts to a pennyworth of gingerbread!"

The date of Saint Days are, in the main, relatively easy to find out through church calendars. This ancient local tradition of community celebration would be relatively easy to resurrect.

Are you inspired by the Tales from the Vale? Would you like to take an active part in keeping the heritage of the rural Vale alive?

If so, Creative Rural Communities may be able to help. We offer support for community projects that conserve our unique heritage.

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For further information and to discuss your ideas, contact Helen Blackmore, Creative Rural Communities, on 01446 704828, or email: hblackmore@vale-of-glamorgan.org.uk.

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'Progress is being made in Rhoose'

FOLLOWING the planning protest meeting on March 3, the Rhoose residents are now seeing some signs of action from the Welsh Government and Vale Council.

Firstly, the Taylor Wimpey signs have been removed from a site in Rhoose Point as the change of use and planning application have not been fully completed or approved.

Also, the Vale Assembly Member, Jane Hutt, met with a delegation from Rhoose last week, to discuss planning, and Rhoose funding for amenities and improvements in the coming financial year.

It was a positive meeting our AM has offered to assist in following up

GEM reader Richard Barnes reports

on the environmental suitability of the land in the LDP designated for housing, given the many flooding issues that have been raised over previous years.

Ms Hutt has also offered to walk the Rhoose and Rhoose Point area on the April 13 with the delegation and residents, to further understand the residents' issues and see first hand the proposed sites.

On April 6, at Stewart Rd Community Centre there is a consultation morning arranged by Creative Wales, that will give residents an opportunity to provide feedback on what amenities they would like to see in Rhoose and how the Vale

Council can assist with funding improvements.

Lastly, the Rhoose Point Residents Association has co-opted some Rhoose residents onto the committee with the aim of forming a Rhoose Residents' Association to lobby for amenities and to oppose

the current planning strategy. If any Rhoose resident wishes to join the committee to assist at this point then please email derek@restec-trhoosepoint.co.uk. A new website and association will follow in the coming months.

WHAT'S ON in brief Fashion show

FOLLOWING the great success with their fashion show last year, the Porthcawl Cancer Research UK committee is hosting another show on April 6, at All Saints church hall (doors open 6.30pm for 7pm).

Samantha B of Ewenny is bringing her spring collection to the town for ladies to help the fight against cancer.

Tickets £5, include a glass of wine and nibbles, from Diane Jones (01656 784762), Sue Sharp (01656 773670), or pay at the door.

Mass in Blue CARDIFF Polyphonic Choir will present *Will Todd's Mass in Blue* on April 12 at the Dora Stoutzker Hall, Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Contact website www.cardiffpolyphonic.org.uk.

VALE RESORT COLLECTS A TOP INDUSTRY AWARD

THE Vale Resort at Hensol scooped a top industry award for its leisure division, at the annual 59 Club Service Excellence Awards.

The resort's leisure membership sales team picked up the award for its approach to customer service during the sales process during 2012.

The 59 Club focuses on member surveys and mystery shopping audits in the leisure and events industry to maintain high levels of customer service. It carried out a

number of mystery shopping visits at the Vale Resort.

Paul Beddoe, sales and marketing director of the Vale Resort, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have beaten off some stiff competition from some of the UK's best leisure resorts to be presented with this prestigious award."

"Our leisure membership sales team work hard throughout the year to offer a professional service, by providing exacting levels of customer care – and to be recognised in this way by the

industry's major benchmarking organisation, is a real honour."

"This award really is a tribute to the team's dedicated efforts."

Mr Beddoe added: "It's our unending focus on the customers' objectives of joining our gym that helps makes our sales process stand head and shoulders above that of our competitors."

"However, once they come to see our first-rate product, as well as the fact that we don't tie them into annual contracts, they are usually sold on the spot."

High Street's bonnet parade

ON Easter Saturday, March 30, the Easter bonnet parade will be taking place in High Street, Barry.

Bob Armstrong, of the local traders, said: "It is great to see a return of one of High Street's great traditions."

"The parade will start at Hubanas at 11am and the children will parade up and down the street."

for best bonnet and fancy dress.

"Afterwards, there will be a Mad Hatter's Tea Party in Hubanas."

The bonnet parade has three age categories – three years old to five years old, six years old to 11 years old, and 12 to 100.

Over the holiday period many of the Barry High Street businesses are putting on activities and entertainment for children.

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Talygarn Vaulters excel (AND MICHIGAN HAS THE LAST LAUGH!)

SEVERAL weeks ago, I was contacted by students from Hartpury College, Gloucester, and asked if we would take our vaulters along to a charity evening they were running and give a demonstration.

I explained that we have only been vaulting for a year and were fairly 'novice,' but they had seen photos on our website from previous events and were keen for us to come.

The event was to take place on March 22. I spoke to all the parents and agreed to take Squad A and two horses. As both horses hadn't been anywhere since the English champs, we decided on taking them to the beach on the basis that if we could do it there, then Hartpury Arena would be okay!

It was a bit of a challenge to start, but both horses settled down

and the kids loved the experience of vaulting on the beach; we also gained quite an audience.

Over the next few weeks, the squad worked on the routine and as it was coming on so well, I decided to take squad B as well.

Hartpury College sent me a poster about the event advertising a presentation by Talygarn Vaulters, after the dressage to music demonstration, but they had changed the date to March 20!

This made a big difference as Robyn had a school tournament in north Wales, Jess was in an eisteddfod, all the kids had school the next day, and none of us was likely to get home much before midnight.

I was also running a show jumping competition at home that evening so it meant organising staff as well. Everyone agreed to go, so we loaded the horses and set off for



Gloucester.

We arrived at around 7pm. Some of the parents hadn't been to Hartpury before and didn't realise how big a venue it is.

The students made us welcome and the parents organised the photos, videos, kids changing, and helped with the horses.

After a quick warm up in the practice arena helpers Cerys and Tracy took the horses into the main arena to warm up and to let them get used to the surroundings.

I gave a short talk to the audience and we started with *Splash*. Squad B performed the Lion King team display followed by nine-year-old old Poppy's individual display. Robyn and Eflon did an elegant pairs

display to 'Skyfall' which broke into 'Gangnam style' half way through.

At this point, we changed horses to Michigan. Squad A performed an individual set of moves in canter and then a team freestyle in walk, followed by Carys's first individual public performance in canter.

I was so pleased with Michigan, as this is the horse that raised a laugh when I said I was going to try vaulting

with him.

The audience gave us a huge applause and the students announced that they had raised £1,000 for the Air Ambulance.

Before we finished, I asked if any children in the audience would like to have a go at standing on *Splash*.

We had approximately eight kids who wanted a go, and also dressage rider Becky Morris from the dressage to music display.

Most of Squad B have never done anything in public before, so it was a great experience for them, and also a chance for the horses and Squad A to practice new moves before our first competition in June.

See video at www.talygarnec.co.uk/vaulting-videos/.

CHRIS ROGERS, Talygarn Vaulters.

New traffic lights and speed limit on A48

NEW traffic lights and a 40mph speed limit will face drivers on the A48 between Bonvilston

and St Nicholas next week.

The new signals at Sycamore Cross will be switched on at 7am on Wednesday April 3.

A Vale Council spokesperson said that they had been installed under the MOVA signal control system, which uses vehicle sensors buried in the carriageway on the approach to the junction, and a computer to optimise the signal timings and improve traffic flow through the junction.

The Sycamore Cross scheme is funded by a grant from the Welsh Government and includes the construction and installation of new traffic islands, upgraded lighting, drainage and ducting, traffic signal equipment, new road signs, lining and extensive resurfacing of the carriageway.

"A 40mph speed limit has been implemented on the road and a new shared cycleway/footway and toucan crossing facilities will increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians using the new junction," the spokesperson explained.

"The scheme designed by engineers from the council's highways and engineering division is intended to control traffic and improve highway safety at the junction with Five Mile Lane (A4226) and the unnamed road to Pendoylan.

"It will also improve access to key destinations, such as Cardiff Airport and Barry," the spokesperson added.

'Dish out Dosh' panel recognises volunteers



Coun Gwyn John with the 'Dish out Dosh' panel.

ON March 7, the Vale Volunteer Bureau held its annual awards evening to celebrate the completion of six community projects conceived, managed, and funded by young volunteers from across the Vale.

Projects were funded via Dish Out Dosh, a 'Dragons Den' style panel entirely made up of young people who chose to divide the £10,000 between six projects ranging from a youth managed youth project run by Sully Youth Club, to a project at the 1148 Penarth Squadron.

Search for Superstars!

This summer, Superstars in the Making and Memo Arts Centre, Barry, are searching for young people to perform in their hit musical production of *Grease*.

Following the successful run of Fame Jr. in August 2012 to sell-out audiences, the team are back and ready to showcase this West-End and Broadway mega-hit.

Already, hundreds of young people from all over south Wales have applied to audition for the performance, to work with director and producer, Christian Bullen.

Now the team are searching for young people based locally to audition and put talent from the Vale on the map!

There will be a workshop-based audition held for chorus next Wednesday, April 3 at The Memo Arts Centre from 3:30 pm-4:30pm, open to performers aged between 10 and 30.

The performance of *Grease* will be staged on August 22-23 at the Memo Arts Centre.

Superstars in the Making has gained the rights to produce this musical from the USA and it is rarely available to perform! To apply to audition head to www.superstarsinthemaking.com or email superstars@radio.fm

Air Training Corps is designed to give young people the opportunity to promote the Training Corps, in a hope of recruiting more young volunteers.

During the evening young people showcased their achievements over the last eight months. It also provided us with the opportunity to formally present 24 young people with their Millennium Volunteer certificates, who between them have carried out over 1,200 hours of volunteering in the last few months.

A further eight young people were awarded with their Agored Cymru qualifications in the Vale. 'Volunteering and Community Involvement' level one and two.

This year the certifi-

icates were presented with help from Coun Gwyn John.

Katherine Davies, trustee for the Vale Volunteer Bureau said: "How lovely to publicly acknowledge the number of volunteering hours that have been achieved by young people. Well done to everyone involved in a very positive celebration of volunteering in practice".

Dish Out Dosh is currently looking for new panel members. For more information on getting involved or any aspect of volunteering, Millennium Volunteers and Agored Cymru Qualifications in the Vale contact Holly Williams Youth Volunteering Officer on 01446 421782 or holly@vvb.org.uk.

HW

'Global warming and a false political dogma'

LAST Thursday's GEM contained a plea from our MP Madeleine Moon that we all put our lights off for one hour on Saturday night, to demonstrate support for the WWF's Earth Hour, which claims that we "need more renewable energy to help protect our planet".

While Mrs Moon is to be admired for her support of recognisable good causes, I would challenge her opinions on the subject of so-called renewable energy.

She is not scientifically qualified in this field, but is motivated by the false political dogma that global warming is endangering Planet Earth, and can be cured by a massive expansion of wind energy.

In fact, the earth has warmed just 0.5 degrees over the past 50 years. Met Office records show that for the past 16 years, temperatures have remained steady.

At the end of last year the Met Office revised its ten-year forecast predicting a succession of years breaking records for warmth. It now says the pause in warming

will last until at least 2017.

This does not accord with Mrs Moon's assertion that "Our reliance on high carbon fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas is overheating the atmosphere and affecting the climate".

She misses the fundamental point that fossil fuel and nuclear power stations are essential baseload suppliers of electricity. Wind energy is so unreliable that it needs 90 per cent back-up from those suppliers to avoid blackouts, and wind energy can only supplement, not replace, those sources.

People now have a choice whether they switch off their lights for Earth Hour, but if Mrs Moon and WWF had their way, we would be in darkness for most of the time without any choice.

Wind energy is not viable without massive subsidies hidden in our electricity bills, which add to fuel poverty. Wind turbines ruin our landscape and shorelines, and will certainly not affect the natural long-standing vagaries of our weather, which Mrs Moon would call climate change.

David Lewis, Porthcawl

Local roadworks

TEMPORARY traffic control: A48 at Sycamore Cross junction between Bonvilston and St Nicholas; Port Road, Rhose, near the Holiday Inn Hotel; Beach Road, Llantwit Major; Windsor Road, Penarth (near Dingle Park footway).

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Ghost film is a seven-year labour of love for Porthcawl producer

A NEW film about ghosts has just been released on DVD, and it tells 12 spectral tales from different parts of the old county of Glamorgan.

Its producer, Anthony Hontoir, of Porthcawl-based Downwood Film Productions, has already made a series of documentaries about local history, concentrating on individual towns in the Bridgend area, but he became interested in ghost stories after making a film about the restoration of Sker House on the coast between Porthcawl and Kenfig.

He told The GEM: "I believe that most people are fascinated by ghost stories, and I am certainly no exception, so I decided to make a film about them."

"However, I didn't want to follow the usual formula of TV ghost hunt programmes. I began by writing letters to all the weekly newspapers in 2006, asking readers to contact me if they had interesting and true stories to tell, and I was surprised by the large response."

"I picked the most intriguing of these tales,



ABOVE: Behind the lens – Anthony Hontoir.

from different parts of the county, and this formed the basis of the script. Other tales came to my notice by word of mouth, and I read of one or two in reference books."

The film, entitled *Ghosts of Glamorgan*, began to take shape, and from the outset it was a low-budget film, and being a traditionalist, Anthony chose to shoot it in 35mm, using proper film rather than digital technology.

"I grew up using celluloid and I happen to believe strongly that it gives a superior result. Many other producers are switching to digital, but I think that it is a big mistake to entrust a

valuable piece of work to this new process."

Anthony wrote the script so that it would feature ghostly encounters from all over the county, including Cardiff and Swansea, the Cynon Valley, Bridgend, Porthcawl and Port Talbot, and he used a large cast of local people as actors and extras.

Stories in the Bridgend area cover ghostly goings-on at Merthyr Mawr dipping bridge, The Great House in Laleston, The Rest Hotel and Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl and The Prince of Wales in Kenfig, a building long associated with spectral sightings and sounds.



Filming a model house at dusk.

Based in his tiny garage studio in Porthcawl, Anthony had the task of building a variety of interior sets for scenes that would have been difficult to film any other way, including the inside of an early 20th Century railway carriage, which took several weeks to construct.

Two model houses were built to play the part of real houses in Gower which feature in one of the tales.

"The film was seven years in production," said Anthony, "and it

was a long and difficult task, made so much easier by the willing help and enthusiasm from everyone who took part. I think the cast all managed to have a bit of fun doing it, but before anyone asks the question, I can tell you I didn't manage to film any real ghosts!"

A *Ghosts of Glamorgan* trailer and cast interviews appear on Youtube, and the film is now available on DVD at £9.95. For more information, go to www.downwoodfilms.com



Daz Joseph playing a fatally injured gamekeeper in a scene shot on Newton Down.



Owain Hume playing a First World War soldier in *The Rest Hotel*.



Ella with her mother Caroline Davies and Anthony Hontoir beside camera at St Fagans.



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Out and About with The GEM

FERRIS ENTERTAINMENT (GEM scholarship founder) INSPIRES A GENERATION AT MAJOR FILM FESTIVAL

PETER FERRIS, who runs Ferris Entertainment Screen Acting and Film Master classes in Barry and Penarth, the first

PARK FUN
BANK holiday events taking place at Porthkerry Park, Barry, include an Easter Egg trail on March 29 to April 7, at 10.30am-3.30pm, and a children's art session from 2pm to 4pm on April 3.

screen acting class to be set up in Wales 10 years ago, was not only a contributor, but also moderator/chairman of the film panel in 'Easy as...1,2,3....Point, Shoot, Share,' at the South by South West Film Festival in Austin, Texas.

Other film panelists included Danny Boyle and Will.i.am, and Peter's panel discussed the rise of new technology and the ability to shoot films on smart-phones.

He commented: "I was very proud to be introduced as a 'maverick' and to talk about and show some of our films, but even prouder of the feedback, not only from the audience, but from my fellow panelists."

"My aim has always been to inspire people and empower people and Smartphone film making is the 'new punk'."

"We at Ferris Entertainment not only receive no funding, but alongside The Glamorgan GEM, we also give free scholarships to allow those with talent, but no money, to train or retrain to experience the film industry – and give them the chance of success in film, TV and commercials."

"That is for all ages – our youngest is 13 and our oldest is 60."

"However, the greatest excitement came from the news that Ferris

Entertainment was soon to launch FerrisEntertainment.TV, a new internet channel where the 31 films and future films made at their master classes in Cardiff, Belfast, London, and soon launching in LA, would be available to view – after being entered in film festivals worldwide.

"We are leading the world in this new technology and intend to stay there. Other companies and training establishments will copy what we do, but they will always be behind."

"There are going to be

other incredible announcements coming soon and, of course in Wales, The Glamorgan GEM will be the first to know, as they believed in us six years ago and saw the potential, when many other people were saying – as they still say, 'They can't do that!'."

"Well done to all the incredible people at The GEM, who realised immediately that, like them, 'we were here to help other people', whereas so many other establishments were only here to help themselves," Mr Ferris concluded.

Artists sought for Heritage exhibition

ARTISTS are being sought for an exhibition celebrating the Glamorgan Heritage Coast at St Donat's arts centre during May.

A spokesperson said: "Artists must have work ready to exhibit."

We welcome all expressive arts disciplines, from visual, performing, digital, crafts, photographers, potters, painters, weavers, actors, dancers, musicians, digital media art, literature and more... so please get in touch."

The exhibition forms part of a wider project to raise the profile of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and is

headed by Creative Rural Communities, the Vale Council's Rural Regeneration team.

Artists wishing to participate in the Glamorgan Heritage Coast exhibition, or wanting to learn more about the Vale Arts

Exchange, should contact 01446 704707 or email artinthevale@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk by noon on Friday, April 19.

Selection for the exhibition will be made by a small independent panel.

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Lorraine - 01446 407002

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St. Francis Millennium Centre, Park Road, Porth-y-Castell
Annmarie - 01446 736534

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Cowbridge Rugby Club
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The Cabin by swimming pool, Hebron Hall
Sarah - 07525852288

Barry - 10.15am
St Helen's Church Hall Wyndham Street
Niki - 01446 740394

Cowbridge 5.30pm & 7.30pm
The Little Shop of Calm, Westgate
Rob - 07708 941279.

Llantwit Major 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Our Lady & St Iltyd Church (Catholic)
Ham Lane East
Helen - 01446 750738

Sully - 6.30pm
The Old School
South Road
Niki - 01446 740394

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All Saints Church Hall Victoria Square
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Out and About with The GEM

College students put on their own 'rock opera'



WHAT'S ON IN YOUR AREA / in brief

Special services

THIS Easter, All Saints Church in Victoria Square, Penarth, is holding a number of special services.

On Good Friday, there is a short children's service from 10am to 3pm.

On Easter Saturday at 7pm, there will be a Vigil service.

Services on Easter Sunday are as follows: Holy Communion at 8am, a family celebration Communion at 3.30pm at St Peter's, Old Cogan, and Easter Evensong at 6pm.

All are welcome – for more information, visit www.allsaintspenarth.org.uk

Easter at Holy Trinity

SERVICES at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, Barry, at Easter are: Maundy Thursday, March 28, at 7pm; Good Friday, March 29, at 10am; Easter Sunday, March 31, at 11am and 6pm.

All of these services will be conducted by Rev Duncan Ballantyne.

The church is situated at the junction of Aberystwyth Crescent and Trinity Street.

Walk of Witness

ON Good Friday, all the Churches of Barry lead the Christian 'Walk of Witness' departing from the Parade Gardens at 12 noon with a service on King Square at 2pm.

The story of the Passion is told at Merthyr Dyfan Church at 10am and St Paul's at 3.15pm.

On Holy Saturday (March 30), the first Mass of Easter will be held at St Cadoc's Church.

Will she be the Belle of your ball?

The GEM is in partnership with the Dog's Trust to find caring homes for animals in their charge at Bridgend Rehoming Centre (Telephone: 01656 725219)

BELLE is a six-year-old Westie. She has been our resident sponsor dog for a few years, but she has done so well in her training that we now feel she is ready to find a loving home.



She is a complex little character – very intelligent, but sensitive with it. She is very quick to learn and is never happier than when she is learning a new trick. We are appealing for someone local to offer her a home, so that they can make regular visits for a few weeks before taking her home to make sure she is really settled and bonded with her new owners.

Belle is a firm favourite at the centre, and will make a very rewarding companion for someone special.

Cadoxton. Sunday's services to celebrate Easter Day are 8.45am at Merthyr Dyfan Church and 10am at St Paul's.

Coffee morning

A **COFFEE** morning will be held at Llantwit Major Bowls Club on Saturday (March 30), 10am–12pm. Entrance is £3 to include tea/coffee with a free top up and biscuit, book stall, cake stall, raffle.

Hangfire gig

SOUTH WALES southern rockers Hangfire's first live date of 2013 is this Saturday at the Barry West End Club.

Bassist Bob Goo (Rob Gough) will be bringing the TBFM Online Factor winners back to his home town with a busy summer of festivals.

Hangfire are signed by Ripple Music, based in California, and are currently writing their second album, to follow on from the well-reviewed debut

album 'Shoot the Crow'.

The support group for the evening will be Blackbyrd.

You can get your ticket from any Spar store in Barry, or at the Barry West End Club for £3 (£5 on the door), or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk.

Beach treasure hunt

AS part of its 50th year celebrations, the Llantwit Major Surf Life Saving Club is holding a treasure hunt at Llantwit Major beach on Easter Monday, April 1, between 1.30 pm–4 pm.

Lucky finders of pirates' buried golden nuggets will be able to exchange them for prizes in the clubhouse! Entry fee is £1.

The club is marking its also 50th birthday with a glittering black tie dinner dance at MoD St Athan on September 28.

For further information, email: lmssl-social@hotmail.com.

ABOVE:

The students are ready to rock at Bridgend College.

Picture by **RANDELL JOHN**
(www.randelljohnphotography.com or 01656 662324)

(See next week's GEM for more photos).

STUDENTS at Bridgend College have written and produced their own 'rock opera' – and the final performance is being staged this evening (Thursday) in the Sony Theatre.

The show, entitled *The Heavy Handed Handsome Headless Horseman*, features original music, written by the students.

All profits will go back into future college productions.

For tickets (£4) and more details, call 01656 302381, or 07931 009425



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COMMUNITY RALLIES ROUND TO MAKE EMYR'S CHARITY PROJECT A REALITY!



Local PACT meetings

BRYNCETHIN PACT public meeting will be held on April 2 at Nazareth Chapel, Bryncethin, at 6pm.

SARN / BRYNCOCH PACT, April 2 Sarn Life Centre at 7pm.

BETTWS PACT April 7, Bettws Life Centre between 12pm-1pm.

BLAENGARW / PONTY-CYMER PACT, April 8, Blaengarw RFC at 6.30pm

NEWTON PACT, April 9, Newton School Rooms at 7pm.

LLANGEINOR PACT, April 10, Richard Price Centre at 10am.

NANTYMOEL / OGMORE VALE PACT, April 10, Horeb Chapel, Nantymoel at 7pm.

BETTWS PACT, April 11, at Bettws Life Centre (upstairs) at 11am

CAERAU PACT April 15, Noddfa Chapel at 6pm.

YNYSAWDRE PACT 17th April 2013 at Ynysawdre Community Centre at 6pm

ABERKENFIG / PENY-FAI PACT public meeting will be held on Monday 29th April 2013 Smyrna Chapel at 7pm

BLACKMILL PACT public meeting will be held on Monday 29th April 2013 at the TRA House, Pentre Beili Terrace, Lewistown at 6pm.

A PORTHCAWL family is "absolutely delighted" at the community efforts that have made their charity project a reality in just over a year.

In February 2012, town residents Paul Downes and Christian Evans approached the Emyr Owen branch of LATCH, the Welsh children's cancer charity, and discussed the possibility of fundraising to buy a caravan for the use of children with cancer and their families.

The Owen family, Kevin, Sandra and son Huw, started the branch after the tragic death of Huw's younger brother, Emyr.

Emyr was diagnosed in 2008 and died in 2009. Despite the tragedy, the fam-

by **PHILIP IRWIN**

ily were deeply touched by the support they received from LATCH, and decided to form a Porthcawl offshoot – the Emyr Owen branch.

LATCH jumped at the proposal and fundraising began in earnest to buy a caravan in Parkdean, Porthcawl. The project was called 'Emyr's Karavan 4 the Kidz'.

Huw Owen told The GEM: "Thanks to the commitment of Paul and Christian, friends, family and the local community, the fundraising began."

"An 80s night in Porthcawl's Grand Pavilion, a bike ride challenge around Wales and PAODS' version of Calendar Girls were just a few of the events held."

"All contributions have

been invaluable and we are extremely grateful to all involved in the process."

Last week, Emyr's Karavan 4 the Kidz' welcomed its first family for a week long stay in Porthcawl.

Huw continued: "We are extremely grateful to all involved in the project, including all friends, family, and Parkdean and Deckrite – who provided the ramp and decking at no cost."

"Paul and Christian's commitment to the project has been exceptional, and we are extremely grateful to them and all involved."

"We hope 'Emyr's Karavan 4 the Kidz' will be used and valued by many families for years to come."

Just one of the fundraising events for the 'Emyr's Karavan 4 the Kidz' project was a cycle ride around Wales. These 12 tired cyclists made it back to Porthcawl on a Sunday evening in August with tired muscles, several dodgy knees, but thousands in the bank for the charity. (PHOTOGRAPH by MALCOLM NUGENT).

Airport fundraisers' £20,000 for charities

Staff and passengers at Cardiff Airport last year raised more than £20,000 for local charities.

Collection tins were left in the terminal for passengers to donate.

Volunteers also collected money at the airport during peak times, often starting at 4am. Airport staff also participated in and organised a

number of fundraising events for charities, including the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, which raised nearly £8,000 over the year.

Other charities which benefited from fundraising at the airport included Cancer Research UK, Ty Hafan, Macmillan Cancer Support and The Christian Lewis Trust.

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Creevy's Punch fails to connect properly

ERAN Creevy's debut film, *Shifty*, was a strong opening salvo from the British director; the tale of a drug dealer and his old friend was a superb piece of work announcing a new homegrown talent.

Creevy's follow-up is a more ambitious effort, however, with *Welcome To The Punch*, a crime thriller that sees James McAvoy's detective Max Lewinsky go after Mark Strong's Jacob Sternwood (a bank robber who escaped from Max three years previously) when he comes back to London after his son is shot.

However as Max's obsession with Jacob takes hold, events conspire that see the two of them become embroiled in something much bigger than they thought...

Eran Creevy is obviously a big fan of Michael Mann, particularly *Heat* as *Welcome To The Punch* shares many of Mann's stylistic touches, and pays particular homage to the crime thriller that is perhaps the best example of the genre to hit the big screen.

While Creevy's ambi-

tion can't be faulted, its similarities to *Heat*, and a lacklustre story, mean that this is one *Punch* that fails to land a knockout blow; instead it is a solidly-made piece that, come the end credits, just feels somewhat underwhelming.

Visually, the film is incredible, the city of London never having been shot with such beauty and clarity before. The steely hues will be more than familiar to Mann fans, but Creevy couldn't have picked a better example to base the film's visual stylings on and it pays off immensely here, the slick look and feel showing a visual ambition that very few British films aim for, and even fewer pull off.

Even the gun shoot-outs are delivered with an intense, balletic feel that lend themselves to a bigger budget American film, and Creevy deserves plaudits for showing how strong a visual director he is, particularly as *Shifty* was a film that didn't rely on its visuals.

But while the American taste lingers with the direction, it doesn't leave a particularly palatable one with the script, the dialogue often being delivered in bite-sized chunks that would sound a lot better being delivered with an

American accent rather than a British one.

The story offers nothing new, feeling hackneyed and all too predictable, and even a late swerve is the sort of twist that comes from predictability rather than necessity. While the film looks amazing, the story just doesn't match up to it.

Pairing two of the finest British exports of recent years in the lead roles doesn't do your film any harm, and both McAvoy and Strong are as dependable and impressive as you would expect.

Their characters aren't the freshest in the world, and neither are their motivations (mirroring the Hanna/McCauley relationship in *Heat*), but the pair travel a well-worn path with no little skill.

There's dependable support from the likes of Peter Mullan, Andrea Riseborough, Daniel Mays and David Morrissey, but it's Johnny Harris, as a psychotic ex-soldier integral to the pair's story, who stands out most in the support cast.

Perhaps the success of his debut has strangled Creevy's own voice, but *Welcome To The Punch* is a very lacklustre follow-up; too indebted to its influ-



by GARETH JAMIESON

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ences with a script that just doesn't come alive. The ambition and visual style shown is impressive - but the execution is not.

VERDICT - If Eran Creevy's debut feature was fresh and exciting, then *Welcome To The Punch* is worn and lively. The film looks so good, but under the stylish visuals lies an average, and all-too-familiar, screenplay. Decent performances just about cover the script's cracks, but it is a disappointing effort from the writer/director.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Heat* (1995), *Lamer Cake* (2004)

TALENTED YOUNG SOLOISTS IN VALE SPRING CONCERT

THE spring concert by Cerdorfa Dinas Powys Orchestra took place on March 17 to a packed and very appreciative audience in The Parish Hall, Dinas Powys.

The orchestra performed Mendelssohn Overture *Fingals Cave* and Schumann *Symphony No. 4 in D Minor* in the first half of the programme.

However, the stars of the evening were undoubtedly the three young soloists, Rosalind Phang, piano; Juliette Roos, violin and Ben Tarlton, cello, performing by kind permission of The Yehudi Menuhin School and playing Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* for piano, violin, cello and orchestra.

They are all only 17 years of age and yet their performance was masterful. Full of confidence and poise and giving every indication of their future careers as successful soloists.

Ben lives in Llantwit Major and at the Yehudi Menuhin School in January 2011. Ben's parents have successful musical careers and his father, Antony Tarlton, is musical director of the orchestra.

This is his 20th year 'in charge' and the concert was a fitting tribute to his dedication and careful guidance during this time, which is much appreciated by all the members of the orchestra.

The orchestra leader, Kay Marshall, is made up of dedicated amateur musicians from Cardiff and the Vale and performs two concerts each year, just before Easter and also in early December.

To keep up to date with forthcoming events and for further details about the orchestra, visit the web site at www.cdpo.org.uk. MD

BARRY TOURIST RAILWAY

THE museum on Barry Tourist Railway's Barry Island Station, will be open on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

The Barry Tourist Railway will come to life over the Easter weekend as vintage trains operate between the station and Barry Waterfront.

Every child riding on the trains will receive a free chocolate bunny, with special family rates available. Full details at www.barrytouristrailway.co.uk or telephone 01446 748816.

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Penarth Computer Club - Learning about Black Boxes

THE 'Black Box' of the computer is a mystery to lots of people who are interested only in using a mouse or keyboard to get the desired result; like the engine in a car or the inside of a television, what happens inside the box is of no interest so long as it works.

So far, so good; there is no danger of confusion between a car, a TV or a computer. Alas, times are changing. More people are using several computers at home and need to link them together for convenience.

This makes sense because all the computers can then talk to a single printer or use the same gateway to the internet. That they can also talk to each other means that files can be backed up easily to a central storage device or onto another computer. They can be linked by cable or wirelessly to form a home network.

To control the traffic another black box is necessary and could be a hub, a switch or a router. Because they form the links in a network and seem to do the same sort

of thing the names are sometimes (wrongly) used interchangeably. These black boxes are all communication devices, but they have different levels of ability.

A Google search will quickly turn up lots of information and use words like Eprotocols, and EIP addresses. That's fine if you feel you need to know all that stuff, but the distinction can be put into simple terms.

A hub is the simplest. A hub will take a signal from any device capable of sending it and forward it to all other devices connected to it.

A switch will start like a hub, but immediately learn the identities assigned automatically to each device. Signals carry information about the originating device and any response will be forwarded to the appropriate device only. That reduces traffic and makes the network more efficient.

A router is a more complex beast. It notes the source of a signal it receives from the home network, but forwards

the signal to the internet as if it was the originator, using its own address. It adds to each signal a code unique to that signal. If the code is contained in a response signal from elsewhere, the router remembers which device on the local network initiated the original signal and routes the response accordingly.

Any unwanted incoming signal such as spam cannot contain such a unique code and cannot be passed to any-

where on the local network. This security is referred to as a Firewall. As a network grows a dedicated computer can be added as a server to handle it all - a bigger Black Box.

The next meeting is on Tuesday April 9 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth 7.30pm for 8pm. Mike J will explore genealogy. See our website at penarthcomputerclub.co.uk.

HOWARD DESMOND

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number 767.

- £2,000: 938709.
- The rollover, which now stands at £10,500, was not won this week.
- £10: 7 7 1 5 5 4, 852522, 685137, 168353, 531477, 594328, 774250, 966597, 903774, 958683, 783084, 596358, 885759, 523875, 302577, 177781, 639078, 898171, 398857, 713832.
- £5: 778165, 660018, 123387, 866581, 238017, 678387, 214325, 116145, 847242, 471940, 896408,

535140, 293029, 478342, 120296, 965154, 860980, 892283, 722621, 162021, 432561, 864023, 442126, 138319, 666448, 764681, 527924, 477902, 299264, 876066, 230869, 549429, 572630, 806562, 497829, 736738, 661223, 917492, 195908, 869529, 595637, 199871, 483668, 464545, 579726, 444578, 563512, 173331, 773514, 241419, 259928, 732837, 562115, 755438, 750357, 679571, 603109, 781240.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

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NEWS FROM PENARTH & DISTRICT RAMBLERS

Spring in the step on a stroll

ELEVEN walkers, including leader William, journeyed up to Usk (in Welsh, Brynbuga, which means Buga's Hill) where the Norman castle above the river and the surrounding town are believed to have been founded by 1120.

The castle was the centre for almost constant battles between the Welsh and the English and, following the Battle of Usk in 1405, when the English forces chased the Welsh across the river for the last time, with great loss of life, the town had to be rebuilt.

On the east bank of the Usk the early frost was melting as the sun shone. Passing the restored white windmill at Llancayo, they followed a natural bend in the river to reach the Llancayo solar panel farm, which covers a 32-acre site set behind hedgerows, generating electricity from daylight all year round.

Heading uphill through meadows they enjoyed morning coffee in Ash Wood, before joining a lane that led to Hill Farm.

From this point, there

were stunning views of the Black mountains bathed in sunlight.

Skilfully avoiding the attentions of some over zealous ponies, they descended into a wondrous green valley to admire the church dedicated to St Aeddan, with its beautiful carved rood screen and three gigantic yew trees adorning the churchyard.

They are poisonous, except for their red berries – which attract birds, and in Roman times the yew was used as an antidote for adder bites.

The largest yew with a 30-foot girth is believed to be over 2,000 years old and inside the decaying hollow centre is a new stem growing and regenerating a new trunk to keep this ancient tree alive.

A bridge has stood at Pont Kemeys since the 16th century, but was destroyed in 1690 by floods.

A solid oak structure replaced it in 1730 before in 1829, it was replaced by an iron bridge supported by sturdy chains that could withstand horses, carts and vehicles crossing.

The present bridge, with its green painted girders, is under threat from corrosion, but is still known as the Chain

Bridge.

Crossing over to join part of the Usk Valley Walk on the west bank, they stopped for a quick lunch as the weather started to deteriorate.

The sunshine returned as fields, woodland paths and quiet roads, the banks of which were bedecked with daffodils, snow drops and celandine, eventually led them back to the old stone bridge which crosses the River Usk.

After a delightful 11-and-a-half mile walk in almost spring like conditions, they prepared for the journey home.

On Saturday, March 30, the group will be celebrating their 20th anniversary with a rural 10-mile moderate walk in the Usk valley, taking in the villages of Tredunnoch and Llanhennoch – leaving Cogan Leisure Centre at 9am. Contact Joy on 01446 737131.

Opening the new programme on Easter Monday (April 1) meet at 9.30am at Cogan for a 9.5-mile mod/hard walk to Sugar Loaf, which features some rough walking; contact Robin on 029 2051 4051.

JOY STRANGWARD

Spring, a time for Easter bunnies, black hounds... and fearsome riders on goats!

SPRING is one of the pleasurable seasons of the year, as it breaks the transition between the winter and summer.

It lasts for three months from March to May, and is an indication that nature is preparing for new beginnings, when animals and insects re-emerge from hibernation and birds raise their young. Plants, flowers and trees begin their rebirth, too.

Spring is a varied season, as throughout the world it is dependent on local climate and time zones.

The spring equinox on March 21 has been declared as the first day of this welcome season, and the noticeable increase in hours of daylight and a rise in temperature are all significant because of the earth's tilt of 23.5 on its axis towards the sun, as well as more prominent tidal currents.

In more recent times, earlier appearances of spring have occurred, with rising temperatures during the winter months, sending nature into confusion.

Also known as the vernal equinox, which

SPOOKY TALES by Hayley Williams

falls between March 19-21, the spring equinox (which means equal night in Latin), was originally introduced by the Romans, who used the lunar calendar to predict the spring season, as they realised that both day and night were 12 hours long.

But it was Julius Caesar who reformed the festival to the solar calendar, declaring the date of the equinox to be March 25, with 365 days in the year ahead and a day extra every four years.

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII changed the date back to March 21, because March and April were known for their connections with religious festivals.

The main celebration during springtime is Easter, which is thought to derive from pagan, Hebrew and Christian traditions.

Eggs portray signs of new life, and they became traditionally eaten at Easter, taken from the German word Eostre.

Eggs were forbidden to be consumed during

the 40 days of Lent, where fasting and omitting dairy products from the diet was essential.

It was customary to present friends with red coloured eggs while chanting Easter greetings. Red symbolised the blood shed by Jesus during his crucifixion.

Ancient traditions surrounding the spring equinox and Easter include Morris dancing, performed on Easter Sunday to banish the evil spirits of winter.

Another favourite custom was performed on Easter Monday and Tuesday. Named 'lifting and heaving', it required young men to visit households in their neighbourhood carrying a chair decorated with flowers.

They would encourage girls or ladies to sit upon the chair, and the men would lift the female three times into the air as a sign of good luck for the year ahead.

The following day, the opposite was performed where the ladies would tend to the duties of the chair lifting.

The fable of freshly-baked bread, made on

Good Friday and handed to sailors on ships about to set off on the high seas, was believed to bring good luck for the voyage ahead.

The eerie occurrence of dancing white waves appearing in the vicinity of Nash Point around Easter time have been seen.

Witnesses have described them as 'Merry dances' when deceased sailors seemed to ride on the crest of the wave as if on horseback.

But could these ghostly images be an indication that the departed are still lurking on the seas where they met their end, or just a trick of the imagination?

An intriguing legend of folklore involves spring-heeled Jack.

Thought to have lived during the Victorian era, he would perform giant leaps into the air at night. He was believed to be tall and thin, wearing a black cloak.

He had clawed hands with his eyes resembling red balls of fire, breathing out blue and white flames before disappearing into the night.

The ghost of the Easter bunny is full of intrigue, as it is said to only appear once a year – on Easter Sunday. Catching a glimpse of this special ghost is said to bring good luck for the year ahead.

Woodland areas are particularly haunted around the time of Easter, where wild hunts were traditional.

Black hounds are said to prowl the dense forest, accompanied by fearsome riders on the backs of horses and goats.

But why would these alarming images want to lurk around areas likely to be unrecognisable to them in today's society?

The coastline around Britain also has its ghostly tales where mermaids are said to ring bells hidden beneath the waters of our shores.

Witnesses to this spectacle are thought to gain a long-lasting and fruitful life... But could these tales be a matter of folklore, passed down through the generations of time?

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WHENEVER The GEM looks at an area such as Cowbridge at this time of year, the theme tends to include the arrival of spring, the onset of warmer weather, the prospect of more daylight as the clocks go forward, and changes that have taken place in the town over the last year.

Well, after the last few weeks, it's probably best to hold fire on the weather and the arrival of spring!

We can, however, rely on the clocks going forward (*that will be in the early hours of March 31*) – and we can also rely on changes in Cowbridge, because the town has definitely not rested on its laurels in recent years.

At a time when many areas bemoan the lack of any worthwhile investment – after all, money is tight – Cowbridge still manages to make things happen.

Visit some towns and things look the same as they did 10 years ago. Visit Cowbridge and you get the sense of an evolving town where various interests – voluntary groups and business interests in particular – are constantly refining and improving the environment.

Of course, attracting investment is easier if the town is an attractive place to visit and to live in, and Cowbridge was recently listed by the Sunday Times as one of the 'Top 10' places to live in Wales.

This reputation means that land in the town is snapped up, and Taylor Wimpey recently bought the site where the Cowbridge Comprehensive Lower School used to be.

The development, named 'Scholars' View' in a nod to its past, is now well under way, and is attracting a great deal of interest.

This will be the second development based on Cowbridge's old school history. It is only a few years ago that Centregreat bought the former Cowbridge Grammar School building and turned it

by **PHILIP IRWIN**

into high-quality apartments, and all the signs are that the latest development will be of similar quality.

Of course, the biggest investment in the town in the last six months or so has been the arrival of Waitrose, who moved into a purpose-built unit on the site of the old Hurrans garden centre.

The food store occupies a distinctive part of the retail sector, and it has definitely attracted visitors from neighbouring towns – in particular, Porthcawl and Bridgend – using the two hours free parking to visit the store and take a look around the town.

It is early days, of course, and too soon to assess the long-term effect of this change to the retail environment, but it has certainly given new visitors the chance to see that the town has a very distinctive range of shops, the vast majority owner managed, and built on the dual concepts of personal service and product lines that offer something different from the chain stores.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 21)

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So much to see...

COMMUNITY SPIRIT IS THE DRIVING FORCE IN TOWN

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20)

Fashion retailer Mark Jones is a classic example of a retailer who has found that Cowbridge is a great place to do business.

Three years ago, he opened E 91, very much a 'fashion forward' boutique, with the accent on showcasing garments that were not available anywhere else in south Wales.

Within a year, he found that a 'slightly older' clientele were asking for a similar choice of outfits, particularly for weddings and special occasions, and so he opened 'E 91 Classic' just down the road.

Mark said: "We chose Cowbridge rather than Cardiff, for instance, because it is easier to give the type of service we want to here.

"We get to know our customers, they tell us what events are on the horizon, and we can let them know what we have coming in, and in which of the two shops they will find it."

He has mothers and daughters among his customers, and a number of customers who travel from London, west Wales and the West Country because they prefer the ambience in Cowbridge.

Alun John is the chairman of the Cowbridge Chamber of Trade, and he feels that the next 12 months is important to the future of the town.

He said: "There is no doubt that what makes Cowbridge a unique place to shop is the lack of chain stores, and I would urge everyone to support the independent traders.

"Clearly, customers can show their support by visiting the shops and taking note of what is on

offer. Also, I would urge landlords to take a longer-term view of Cowbridge, when setting their rents, so that the town can protect its reputation as a shopping centre that has a wide variety of 'niche' shops."

Voluntary groups play a big part in Cowbridge, not just by putting on events but by adding to the amenities and the social fabric of the town.

The Cowbridge and Llantwit Major Lions have stepped up to the plate this year by reviving the May Fayre – an old country tradition that faded away some years ago.

It will be back this year, however, at the Bear Field on May 6.

GREAT SUCCESS

Other voluntary groups – and there are several – put their time and expertise to improving the town by reviving neglected areas, and in recent years they have had great success.

The Cowbridge Physic Garden Trust succeeded in gaining Lottery cash to convert an overgrown area into a geometric garden, featuring flowers and plants used by physicians several hundred years ago.

It is an established tourist attraction now, and a great place to stop and read or have a break – when the weather improves.

Similarly, the Old Hall Gardens Trust, through a combination of grant aid and volunteers' efforts, has overseen a transformation of an area that is, after all, just off the main street.

Holy Cross Church – a beautiful building in its own right – has recently completed a re-design, to make it a more flexible space that can be used for community events.

Another trust, this time the Cowbridge Charter Trust, has been busy in recent years reclaiming the

historic town walls and these are now restored and on public view.

They are still on the case, though, and the next stage of their work will see old cattle sheds knocked down, revealing more of the walls, and creating extra parking spaces as well!

Cowbridge's strengths are well known. The alley ways and courtyards, rich in history and dotted with businesses that offer something special are an established plus point.

Similarly, the range of options where you can stop for a coffee, a drink, a pub meal, a sandwich or tapas, or a restaurant meal, are well known to the town's residents and regular visitors.

What makes Cowbridge different, however, is the constant striving to improve the town.

Some towns have plenty of organisations that "want to keep things as they are" and who will write to the papers opposing just about everything.

Cowbridge's organisations are different because, while they will band together to protect things that are valued in the town – just look at last year's protests to save the livestock market – they also spend time on finding ways to improve the town.

Long may it continue!

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ABOVE: The Stagecoach pupils get dressed up for Red Nose Day.

STAGECOACH Theatre Arts in Cowbridge have enjoyed a fantastic term, with great drama, dance and singing sessions, rehearsals, auditions, filming opportunities, presentations and awards.

Students also dressed up in fancy dress for Red Nose Day, and raised a fantastic £272.54!

They are enrolling now for the summer term and holiday workshops, so for more information, telephone Helene and Rob on 01446 781454.

EASTER CRAFT HOUR

A children's store in Cowbridge will be raising cash for Ty Hafan with

a craft hour and Easter egg hunt this Saturday (March 30). Daisy and Jack's

will be showing children how to make Easter decorations and doing glitter tattoos and face painting, starting at 11am.

The Easter hunt starts at 12 noon. The cost is £10, places must be pre-booked, and all profits will go to the Ty Hafan hospice.

For more information, telephone 01446 772133 or e-mail info@daisyandjack.co.uk

Orchestra's concert

THE Rhondda Symphony Orchestra will be performing a concert in the beautiful setting of Holy Cross Church, Cowbridge, on April 13, at 7.30pm.

The programme includes Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suites 1 and 2*, and Schumann's *Symphony No 1*.

The orchestra, conducted by Donal Bannister, will also play

Simon Will's *Truffaldino*, which is based on the music of Scarlatti.

Tickets are £10, but under-18s are free. For further details, telephone 01443 650412.

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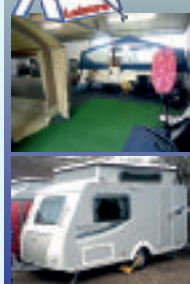
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COWBRIDGE



Cowbridge church's Palm Sunday tradition



The Cross leads the procession on its way from the town hall to Holy Cross Church.

PHOTOGRAPH by MIKE WILCOCK.

CHURCHES Together in Cowbridge braved the biting winds on Palm Sunday for the traditional procession, which was followed by an ecumenical service.

The procession assembled at the town hall, and made its way to Holy Cross Church in time for the service.

Easter services will continue this weekend. Tomorrow (Friday) there will be a Liturgy of the Passion and Holy Communion at noon at Holy Cross Church.

At 3pm, there will be a performance of Stainer's 'The Crucifixion' at Llanblethian Church (admission free).

On easter Saturday, there will be a Taize Vigil and first Eucharist at

Ystradowen.

Easter Sunday services start at 6am with a 'Son Rise Eucharist' at Llanfrynach, and an 8am Eucharist at Holy Cross.

At 9.15am, there will be eucharists at

Llanblethian, Llandough, Penllyn and St Mary Church, and at 11am, there will be eucharists at Flemingston, Llansannor, Ystradowen, St Hilary and Holy Cross.

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BONNETS, EGGS AND AN ICE CREAM HAT FOR EASTER!

The end of term at All Saints Church in Wales Primary School was celebrated in the usual way, with a colourful Easter bonnet parade.

Children posed, class by class, in their crafted creations and the judges had a really challenging task.

Three winners were chosen from each class and they were presented with certificates and chocolate Easter eggs provided by the parents and friends association.

There was an amazing array of original ideas and year-6 teacher, Mr Ball, thought the ice cream hat was good enough to eat!

Headteacher, Richard Ware, praised the children for their enthusiastic participation and wished everyone a happy Easter.



LM



Miss Wales finalist's fundraising appeal

A former member of 10th Barry Guides, Rachel Peters (pictured right), is asking local residents to support a charity fundraising effort.



Rachel (17) said: "As a Miss Wales 2013 finalist, I am fund-raising for Bobath Wales, on March 30 with a table top sale in aid of 10th Barry Guides. It starts at 9.30am, at the Guide Hall on top of Romilly Road (opposite Romilly School).

"I hope everyone can come, all the money goes to Bobath, such a great cause!

"Free entry, cakes, coffee and much more" she added.

Local band launches EP

ON March 30 at 7pm local band called 'Back to November' has its official EP Launch in the Glamorgan Suite at Barry Memorial Hall.

The band's EP Without Reason will be available on iTunes from March 30.

"We have been together for just over a year now and have been

recording for the past few months. The EP consists of 4 tracks: 1. Falling (original) 2. I Won't Give Up (cover) 3. Hazel Eyes (original) 4. Tickle Tears (original)" said band spokesman Edan Edwards.

The event starts at 7pm and tickets can be bought via the Memo website for £6. check Memo website for details.

What's on, and where?

Art show

AN exhibition of local artist Gary Hamer Rees's latest oil paintings continues at Llanerch Vineyard, Hensol, Vale of Glamorgan.

Diggers wanted!

VOLUNTEERS are needed on April 8 to dig over planting area to help Llanblethian Community Group create a Diamond Jubilee feature for the 2013 Best Kept Village competition.

Digging will take about three to four hours for two to three volunteers.

Contact Mike (01446

773583), Rebecca (01446 773264), Arthur (01446 772995), Chris (01446 775020) or Beverly (01446 772704) to volunteer.

Spring concert at Ramoth

A SPRING concert by Con Voce will take place at Ramoth Church, Cowbridge.

'April Shower', an evening of music, is on Friday, April 12, at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £5, and available from Mrs Mavis Ashford or church members.

All proceeds will go to Bible society and church funds.

FoE meets

BARRY and Vale FoE will meet on April 2, to consider the Local Groups' Conference being held in Hebron Hall, Dinas Powys, from April 26-28.

The group will be pushing for a green belt in the Vale LDP, to stop further greenfield development, from Porthkerry to Barry Woods and from Wenvoe to Sully.

It will be inviting local politicians to discuss energy, Hinkley Point nuclear power and the barrage, or sustainable green energy, at their meeting on May 7.

Councillor tells how an ADHD diagnosis has changed his life

LOCAL BCBC Councillor Luke Ellis has revealed that he has been diagnosed with an adult version of ADHD (attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder), the same neurobiological disorder as Olympic swimmer, Michael Phelps.

Coun Ellis has called for more to be done to help those experiencing the condition after finding relief from his life-long symptoms – but only after being forced to fund private treatment which cost him in excess of a thousand pounds.

When speaking to GEM local correspondent Richard Sims last week, Coun Ellis said he thought that the Kenfig Hill and Pyle electorate deserved to know the truth about his condition, which had only been diagnosed in recent months.

He said that during his school years his concentration and memory were always a cause for concern to his parents and teachers and that he often found himself under-performing and sometimes acting impulsively or speaking out of turn without thought of the consequences.

Since being elected to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) last May and becoming scrutiny



ABOVE: Coun Luke Ellis, who has recently been diagnosed with the adult form of ADHD.

champion for assisted learning needs, he became involved with support groups for people with ADHD, which is when he recognised that many of the symptoms and patterns of the conditions were in his own life.

Coun Ellis said that he was thankful to have such a fantastic family and a very supportive GP who referred him for diagnosis, but he discovered that the service for adults with this neurobiological condition was virtually non-existent.

He said that he had now written to the new health minister asking him what he intends to do to retain and upgrade the service, as he is extremely concerned for people and their families who suffer this condition

in silence and who urgently need a diagnosis and follow up support.

He said that he was also deeply concerned and worried about children in the Bridgend area who reach the age of 18 who seem to go into a medical wilderness where services are rather patchy, to say the least.

Coun Ellis said that he was pleased that the BCBC education department, assisted learning needs, has a good understanding of the condition and that more is being done for children and their families with this disorder.

However, he said that his main worry about the adult service being run down is borne from his late diagnosis, which meant he had to pay for it at a specialist clinic.

Medication for the condition is available and extremely effective for many people. Coun Ellis said that the fact is, it has saved him from a lifetime of needless worry about forgetting people's names, dates and times which was always awkward for him being in politics.

He said that now he has been prescribed the correct medication he remembers names, which previously didn't stick in his mind, as well as conversations and faces.

RICHARD SIMS

Search and rescue service is on its way

THE Vale MP, Alun Cairns, says that rescue services south Wales will benefit from improved response times when St Athan becomes the base for two search and rescue helicopters.

At the moment, most rescues in south Wales are responded to from the RAF base in Chivenor on the north coast of Devon.

St Athan's gain, therefore, will be Chivenor's loss.

Mr Cairns reveals the details of the scheme in his column in today's GEM (see page 29) and it has come about after the UK Government signed a contract with the American company, Bristow Helicopters Ltd, to provide search and rescue helicopter services in the UK.

It means that the RAF will no longer run search and rescue in the UK, and bases such as RAF Valley in Anglesey will lose the service, as it will

move to Caernarfon Airport.

Bristow has won a 10-year contract, worth £1.6 billion, and will be supplying more modern helicopters than the RAF Sea King, which is close to the end of its working life.

Two AgustaWestland AW189 helicopters will fly from the new search and rescue base at St Athan, and Mr Cairns says that it will result in improved flying times and better coverage of high-risk areas across south Wales and the Bristol Channel.

At the moment, there are 10 search and rescue centre in the UK, and that will still be the case under the new contract.

Vale AM Jane Hutt said: "The new helicopter search and rescue base at St Athan is also good news for the St Athan Enterprise Zone which is focused on the aerospace sector. It will be valuable in enhancing the local economy."

Bridgend student is starting to build success with award

RIGHT: Lewis Knight, winner of the Skills Competition Wales final of the 14-16 Schools Category for construction industry trainees.



A BRIDGEND teenager has laid the foundations for a future career in the construction industry by scooping the gold award in a prestigious all-Wales skills contest.

Lewis Knight's victory in the EU-backed SkillsCompetition Wales 14-16 schools category could see him follow in his carpenter father's footsteps.

Lewis, 16, a pupil at Bryntirion Comprehensive School beat off challenges from seven other finalists from across the country in an intensive exercise which required contestants to tile a wall and create a timber border to industry standards against the clock.

The final was part of the respected annual SkillsCompetition Wales programme, backed by the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund, which is designed to showcase excellence

in vocational learning and promote the importance of developing a highly-skilled workforce. The 14-16 Schools Category competition final was hosted by Bridgend College at Pencoe.

Lewis currently combines school with Level 1 studies in Building Craft Occupations at Bridgend College three days a week via the 14-19 Learning Pathway programme.

He said: "My dad has always been self-employed and I always wanted to do something similar, so to have been able to start my course at

Bridgend College while I am still at school has been great. It is just awesome to have won this competition, especially as my dad is now asking me to do bits and pieces of tiling and similar work around the house.

"I was really happy that I'd won the competition. Next year I am going to stay on at college and get a place studying brick laying, and eventually I would like to be a self-employed builder."

Fellow Bridgend College student James Murray, 16, took home the silver award.

FREE FAMILY FUN DAY IN BRIDGEND

A FREE family fun day will take place on Thursday, April 4 between 10am – 3pm, at the Bowls Hall, Bridgend Recreation Centre.

Organised by Bridgend County Borough Council's family information service, in partnership with the Families First programme, the event will feature a range of free children's activities such as Crazy Karts, a drumming workshop, bouncy castle, face painting, craft activities

and much more. Meanwhile, parents will be able to learn about the services available for families throughout Bridgend County Borough, including the Families First programme which will officially launch at the event.

Funded by Welsh Government, Families First is a five year project which emphasises prevention and early intervention for families.

Bridge FM will be broadcasting live from the event and special guests will be visiting throughout the day, including South Wales Police mascots 'Billy Blue' and 'Tarian', and regular favourite, The BookStart Bear.

Entry is free and children aged 0 – 10 years must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information contact 0800 180 4320 or visit www.bridgend-familyinfo.org.uk.

Chamber of Trade change positions

FORMER Porthcawl Town Council leader Chris Smart is the new president of the local Chamber of Trade and commerce.

Former Porthcawl Mayor and current Rest Bay councillor David Newton-Williams, was re-elected vice president; carpet retailer Alun Edwards relinquished the secretary's role to become treasurer and ex-town councillor Jill Sweet has taken over, with the position re-named administrative officer.

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Masonic Home residents donate to local charities



Chris Page (club captain, Rest Bay Lifeguards), Mrs Glenys Wyn Jones (previous church warden at RMBI Albert Edward), Mrs Sandra Owen representing the Emyr Owen Branch of LATCH

RESIDENTS at the RMBI Albert Edward residential home in Porthcawl have been donating to the church fund for many years and supported numerous causes.

This year, two deserving charities have benefited. The first was the Emyr Owen branch of LATCH, the charity that supports children who are receiving treatment for cancer at the Children's Hospital for Wales, and their families.

Since Emyr's death in 2009, Emyr's mum Sandra Owen has worked hard fundraising for this

great cause, and she was on hand to accept the cheque for £300. Emyr's gran, Betty Price, is a resident at the home. The money will go towards furnishing a caravan that LATCH has purchased for children to use for holidays.

Second, residents read about the Rest Bay Lifeguards having had their ATV stolen. They were saddened to hear this could affect rescue effort and decided to donate a further £300 to this cause. Club captain Chris Page accepted the cheque on behalf of Rest Bay Lifeguards. Rebecca Timms

Who wants to build what and where?

front.
Mr P A Williams – 28 Cae Canol, Porthcawl – First floor extension over existing garage.
Mrs I Burridge – 21 Nantylfyllon Terrace, Maesteg – Two storey kitchen/bedroom extension.
Mr Thomas Dawkins – Land adjacent Ty Egwys, Newcastle Hill, Bridgend – Detached two and a half storey single dwelling.
Mr P J Evans – 120 Victoria Street, Pontycymer – Replacement single garage.
Mr D Gould – 7 Spoonbill Close, Porthcawl – Dormer extension to provide two bedrooms and a shower room.
Mr Paul Smithson – Nyth Clud, Heol yr Ysgol, Coity – Single storey side extension and two storey rear and single storey rear extensions.
Filigree Trading Ltd – Land at Tremains Road, Bridgend – Relax condition 1 of P12/392/RLX to allow refurbishment, distribution and sale of donated furniture and household goods.
Mr Jim Lacey – Greenmeadow Inn, Greenmeadow Terrace, Llangenor – Convert part of ground floor Green Meadow Public House to form two bed and breakfast rooms.
Ms Jan Williams – 13 The Retreat, Porthcawl – Construct 4/5 bedroom detached house with integral garage.
Ms Jan Williams – 13 The Retreat, Porthcawl – Construct detached dwelling with integral garage.
Mr D Davies – 4 Mayfield Avenue, Laleston – Rear flat roof dormer extension.
Mr E Guillerme – 9 Waunlon, Porthcawl – Single storey rear side extension.
Ms Terrina Greenslade – 26 High Street, Ogmere Vale – Dormer and balcony to rear.
Mrs Collette Sawdon – 90 St Davids Way, Porthcawl – Two storey side and single storey rear extensions and new vehicular access.

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'He ain't heavy – he's my brother'

Alan donates kidney to Colin

by TIM CHAPMAN

THERE'S A famous song by the Hollies – 'He ain't heavy, he's my brother' – that that could have been written for two brothers from Barry.

When Colin Peterson discovered his kidneys were packing up during a routine medical check-up, in stepped older brother Alan (62) to donate one of his own kidneys.

The Vale's Assembly Member, Jane Hutt, who met both men during the annual Kidney Wales' Walk for Life in Barry on March 17, hailed Alan's selflessness.

"This is a wonderful story of a Barry man donating a kidney to his brother who was suffering from kidney disease. Alan is a kidney donor hero."

Colin (56) certainly agrees: "Alan really went through it – sometimes it is worse for the donor."

"I discovered the kidneys were closing down during a medical check-up that I needed to hold



Assembly Member Jane Hutt took part in the Walk for Life recently with among others, Colin (second from left) and Alan (on his left).

onto my heavy goods' licence.

"My wife wanted to help me desperately, and my son Lyndon and daughter Emily, but Alan was the best match."

"I had the operation November 11 at the Heath Hospital."

"We went in together on the Sunday and had the operation on the Monday."

"Alan went down an hour before me, and I was down there for four hours."

"An hour or two after the op, we were both sitting up chatting together. We've spoken every day since."

"The team in the trans-

plant unit are wonderful, wonderful people."

The brothers are both well known in the town due to their long association with the Sea View Lads Angling Club. Alan is also the popular manager of The Grapevine in the Romilly area of the town.

Alan said that when he found out that Colin's health was in serious danger he had no hesitation in making the sacrifice.

"Colin's kidneys were diseased and it looked like he would need dialysis, so I've no regrets about donating my kidney."

"The transplant team

are wonderful, excellent. They have all the back-up and couldn't do enough."

Jane Hutt Vale's pointed out that there were large numbers of people who were susceptible to kidney problems.

"Over 3 million people in the UK are at risk of kidney disease."

"The Walk for Life helps to raise funds for research and remind us all that promoting an active lifestyle by walking or running is important to prevent ill health and kidney disease."

"It is great that this successful event takes place every year in Barry."

Parishioners brave cold for Palm Sunday walk



ON Palm Sunday, parishioners of St Theodore's Church, Kenfig Hill, braved below zero temperatures to walk with their palm crosses to the memorial garden in the church grounds.

Above, the palm crosses were blessed by the Priest-in-Charge, Rev Jonathan Durley, before the congregation headed back into the welcome warmth of the church.

Keith E Morgan

Did you know you can read your GEM online? See bridgend-today.co.uk

Quiz League round-up

ALTHOUGH the first division title was decided prior to the final week of the season, division two went down to the wire, as it were.

In fact, the two teams at the top after March 11 finished third and fourth on the 18th.

But, let's return to the first division. Llangewydd Arms had a bye on the final Monday, but had already taken the title after suffering just one defeat, and that by a single point.

Oldcastle 'A' won their last match against Tyrysha Royals by 52 points to 47. Then, after a four-point gap came three teams with equal points, Crown Inn 'A', who won their last game 46-39 against Mackworth Arms, Tyrysha Nomads, 53-50 versus Tondur Railway

Club and then the Royals.

Mackworth & Tondur Railway, were a further point behind and then the two relegated teams, Six Bells who beat the Pheasant Poachers 46-38.

In Division two, Greenmeadow, who snatched the title at the end from Crown Inn 'B' by beating them 55-41, then Laleston Inn 'A', grabbed second place by a point by winning 50-44 at Coychurch Wanderers who had to settle for fifth spot. Cabo Roche who had been top had to sweat out a bye before eventually slipping to third.

Laleston Inn 'B' beat Oldcastle 'B' 45-43 and Pheasant Gamekeepers 46-39 were victors at last-placed Pyle RFC, shared fifth place with Coychurch Wanderers and the penultimate

place was filled by Oldcastle 'B'.

Here are your four specials:

1) In 'A Tale of Two Cities', at the end of the book, who died because of his love for Charles Darnay's sweetheart, Lucie Manette, taking Darnay's place on the guillotine?

2) Who acted as Telford in television's 'Telford's Exchange'?

3) Who rode Amberleigh House to win the 2004 Grand National?

4) What nationality is, or was, Manfred Mann?

A RUDGE (for Quiz League)

ANSWERS:
1. Sidney Carton.
2. Peter Barkworth.
3. C Lee.
4. South African.

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THIS March has not been a good one as far as the weather goes, but it can be relied upon to deliver one very welcome event without fail.

It is, of course, the month when the clocks go forward and the days suddenly get longer.

Along comes April and (we hope) the weather gets warmer and thoughts inevitably turn to taking advantage of that seasonal improvement.

It is the time of year when those winter daydreams can be turned into reality.

Work in the house or garden has been planned, trips away have been researched, and diary entries have been made, making time and space for a plethora of projects.

For some, the chosen project will be that old traditional favourite – spring cleaning.

If that is what is on your radar, then it can save a lot of time to look around and see which areas of expertise are available in the Vale to help you.

Whether you get a buzz from spring cleaning – or whether it is a bit of a chore – there are ways to do the job quicker and more thoroughly, if you do your research.

Perhaps you could bring a specialist in to tackle the most time-consuming tasks?

That way, you would have more time to do all the other stuff. You could finish it ahead of schedule, and then start something new.

Or, you could reward yourself for your efficiency by starting that book you have put aside since Christmas, or head off on a day trip.

Don't forget easily over-looked tasks such as changing the batteries on smoke alarms. Smoke alarm and CO2 alarms should have their batteries changed once a year.

Of course, at this time of the year many people have a longer break in mind than just a day trip.

It's a great time to take a long weekend or a week's holiday, and head to that area you can't believe you haven't explored.

For this writer, I'm ashamed to say, it's west Wales!

If you are taking that chance to head off in the car, it is best to make sure that your car isn't due a check-up.

It has been a rough winter, and it's a good idea to see your friendly garage and get things checked out, because a short break can be badly damaged by a vehicle malfunction!

A different spring activity is getting stuck into your garden maintenance, and there are more than a few tasks which need to be tackled.

For those lucky enough to have mature landscaping in the yard, early spring is an excellent time to prune shrubs and tree limbs that are dead, diseased, or touching your home.

After pruning away overhanging tree limbs, it's a good idea to check the roof in case your trees have shed any branches during the winter winds.

Once again, when planning your garden spring cleaning, it is a good idea to weigh up how much time you have, and consider whether 'delegating' some tasks to an expert could free up your time to give you

a better opportunity to indulge your creative side.

Don't forget, The GEM features many local services that are there to make your life easier, so why not take advantage of that when you plan your next garden project!

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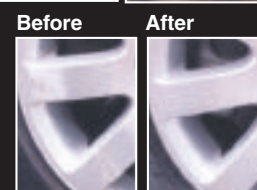
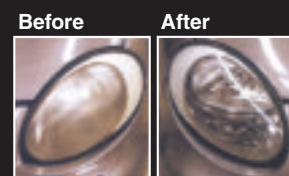
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Cadets' adventure training In the Black Mountains



ABOVE: Time for a photo shoot.

RECENTLY, 12 Air Cadets from 372 (Barry) Squadron, travelled to the Black Mountains to walk up Sugarloaf to train cadets to a competent degree of navigation and team building skills.

The cadets walked 12 kilometres gaining 800 feet of height. The walk gave some of the

younger cadets a taste of the outdoors and what is expected of them on their Duke of Edinburgh bronze expeditions.

The route followed a mixture of well defined paths, tracks, forestry sections as well as moderate climbs. The cadets worked very well, encouraging and assisting each other throughout the day.

They also had a first aid exercise which they successfully dealt with. The pace throughout the day remained brisk, helped with good weather and wonderful views of the area.

Cadet Pippa Cowles said: "It was really cool and the views from the top of Sugar Loaf were amazing. I enjoy the challenge of the walk and I learnt so much which will help me prepare my Duke of Edinburgh expedition".

Adventurous training forms a very important part of the cadets' training. Rigorous training covers – teambuilding, leadership, mountain craft, camp craft, safety training and navigation before going on the hills. Recently, the squadron has travelled to the Forest of Dean and Neath Valleys in preparation for their forthcoming Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

Cadets Nathan David, Rachel Carbis, Jack Cowles, Alex Spragg, Jake Paterson, Steph Jones, Georgina and Ellie Poulakis, Rhondda Gulley, Bethan Williams, Pippa Cowles and Jamie-Leigh Bird benefited from this taste of the great outdoors.

If you have a spirit for adventure, 372 (Barry) Squadron have vacancies for boys and girls between 13-18 years old. The Squadron parade on Mondays and Wednesdays 7 – 9.30pm behind Adams Funeral Parlour (by the Memorial Hall) or you can phone the Squadron on 01446 747734 or email oc.372@air-cadets.org.

Lord Lieutenant heads the VIP gathering at annual church service

THE Lieutenancy of South Glamorgan held the annual church service this year at St. Mary's Church, Penmark, by permission of the Vicar and Church Wardens.

It was conducted by the Venerable Peggy Jackson, Archdeacon of Llandaff and Rev Stewart Lisk, honorary chaplain.

The Lord Lieutenant and serving and supernumerary Deputy Lieutenants, families and guests, were then welcomed to a reception at Fommon Castle by the Vice-Lord Lieutenant, Sir Brooke Boothby and Mrs Penny Hale.



Archdeacon Jackson and High Sheriff.

Photographs by HEATHER MARCH



The Chaplain to the Lieutenancy and Commander Peter Machin.



Sir Brooke and Mrs Hale with the Lord Lieutenant's cadets.



Sir Brooke greets Deputy Lieutenants Mr Nigel Walker and Mr Geraint Talfan Davies.



Lord Lieutenant Dr. Peter Beck and Mrs Beck arrive at Penmark.



Chatting to Lieutenant Col Sam Smith of Llanbethery.



The High Sheriff of South Glamorgan Mr Arun Midha and Mrs Midha.

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

Conservation Area Consent/ Caniatâd Ardall Gadwraeth

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00186/CAC
Proposal/Cynnig: External renovations, ground floor extension and new vehicular entrance
Location:/Lleoliad: The Tower, Tower Hill, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardall Gadwraeth: Penarth

Listed Building Consent/ Caniatâd Adeilad Rhedredig

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00180/LBC
Proposal/Cynnig: Repair/renovation, including demolition of chimney stack and replacement of 5 No. windows on main building; plus works to store block
Location:/Lleoliad: Albert Road Primary School, Albert Road, Penarth
Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Grade II

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00189/LBC
Proposal/Cynnig: Single storey rear extension and internal alterations
Location:/Lleoliad: 10, Pwll y Myn Crescent, Peterston Super Ely
Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Grade II

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00196/LBC
Proposal/Cynnig: Alterations to ground floor and extension to rear of ground floor
Location:/Lleoliad: 29, High Street, Cowbridge
Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Grade II

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00197/LBC
Proposal/Cynnig: Three internally illuminated textbands; two internally illuminated projectors; one internally illuminated round brand logo; two internally illuminated heritage window light strips; one externally non illuminated applied vinyl; two externally non illuminated aluminium name plate; two internally non illuminated applied vinyls
Location:/Lleoliad: Lloyds TSB Bank Plc, 1, Windsor Road, Penarth
Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Grade II

Affecting setting of a Listed Building/ Cais (au) sy'n effeithio ar leoliad Adeilad Rhedredig

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00186/CAC
Proposal/Cynnig: External renovations, ground floor extension and new vehicular entrance
Location:/Lleoliad: The Tower, Tower Hill, Penarth
Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Affecting Nos. 1-5 Tower Hill Avenue, Grade II and Coastguard Cottage, No. 2 Marine Parade, Penarth, Grade II

May affect a Public Right of Way/ Gall effeithio ar Hawl Tramwy Cyhoeddus

Application No./ Rhif y cais: 2013/00173/RG3
Proposal/Cynnig: Double classroom extension to existing school
Location:/Lleoliad: Ysgol Dewi Sant, Ham Lane East, Llantwit Major

Details may be inspected for 21 days at the address given below, or via <http://vofonline.planning-register.co.uk/>

Gall manylion eu harchwilio am 21 diwrnod yn y cyfeiriad a roddir isod, neu drwy <http://vofonline.planning-register.co.uk/>

Dated / Dyddiedig: 28 March, 2013

M. Goldsworthy, Operational Manager Development & Building Control, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry. CF63 4RT

Brynhill (and Tommy) raise £3,000 for hospital appeal

ON Friday March 15, a charity evening with raffles and an auction was held at Brynhill Golf Club, Barry – in aid of the haematology department at University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.

The event was superbly organised by Mr Richard Pierce and magnificently compered by Dr Andrew Davies.

The guest speaker was the famous Wales and British Lions flanker, Tommy David, who entertained all present with his amusing tales of Lions tours, Welsh games and the famous 1971 Barbarians' match against the All Blacks, in which he had taken a starring role.

The fundraising had begun a few

weeks earlier by past ladies' captain Jo Kirkpatrick, who cajoled the members into buying raffle tickets.

Together with the rugby memorabilia (many items kindly donated by Tommy David and Mike Phillips) auctioned on the night, the grand sum raised was just short of £3,000.

Special thanks go to Professor Nick Topley, who donated prizes for the raffle and also to Mrs Julie Bannister (Brynhill's new caterer) for an excellent meal and service on the night; 85 people supported the charity event, with many guests from the haematology department.

Consultant haematologists, Mr Jonathan Kell and Mr Keith Wilson thanked Brynhill for their donation and for the warm welcome received from the club members.

JWK

Easter egg hunt at the Penarth Farmers' Market

DESPITE the freezing weather local children enjoyed an Easter egg hunt held at Penarth Farmers' Market last Saturday, March 23.

Pegs were hidden around the market, which the children could redeem for Easter eggs. One special peg was found by five-year-old Mackenzie Jeffreys, who won the large chocolate bunny.

Chairman Dai Llewellyn of Great House Farm, Penllyn, coordinated the excited children!

The next market is on April 6, at Cowbridge, when it will be running another Easter egg hunt.



IT'S COOL FOR CATS! 'Eggs-travaganza' raises £1,600 for adoption centre



PHOTOGRAPHS
by
SUE DOBBS.

THESE pictures, by Sue Dobbs, were taken at the 'Eggstravaganza' event at Cats Protection's adoption centre in Bryncethin on Saturday, March 23.

Despite the freezing weather, over 300 people attended the event and over £1,600 was raised to help care for the cats in the centre.

The Easter egg hunt was very popular with the children, with over 50 taking part in the hunt. Other attractions included raffle, bric-a-brac, tombola, fresh cakes, refreshments and much more.

"We would like to say a big thank you to members of the public and local businesses who donated raffle prizes and goodies, staff and volunteers for working hard to make the



event happen and members of the public who came to support us on the day," said Sue Dobbs, the centre manager.

Cats Protection, Bridgend Adoption Centre is based at Pant Hirwaun, Bryncethin, Bridgend, CF32 9UJ. Telephone 01656 726 621 or email bridgend.manager@cats.org.uk.

Writer's short story award

A children's story submitted by Bridgend resident Laura Foakes, has led to her winning a south Wales short story competition.

"The Countess and the Mole Man" impressed the judges at publishing company Candy Jar Books so much that they asked to see her other work and signed her up.

They will now be working with her to publish her first children's book.

Noelle Bryant (Sully), Jane Fraser (Swansea) and Geogia Carys Williams (Swansea) were also highly commended by judges.

"The Countess and the Mole Man" will be released on March 28 as a paperback and ebook.

At the end of last year Candy Jar Books launched the South Wales Short Story Competition, giving aspiring writers the opportunity to be published.

Following a lengthy and difficult judging process, thirteen short stories were chosen for publication in 'The Countess and the Mole Man', including Laura's winning entry of the same title.

Having read Laura's competition entry, the company was intrigued and asked to look over her other writing projects. A children's story sparked the interest of commissioning editor, Rebecca Lloyd-James, and Laura is now on the way to becoming a published author in her own right.

Musical splendour boosts mayor's charity

'AN Evening of Musical Splendour' was held at St. Mary's Church, Noltan, arranged by the Bridgend County civic charity appeals committee for the Mayor of the county borough, county councillor Marlene Thomas' chosen charities.

Rev Michael Komor - Rector of the parish of Coity, Noltan and Brackla, was master of ceremonies and a full church appreciated music from Norway and Wales.

Two choirs, the Sandefjord Male Choir from Norway and Maesteg Gleemen Male Choir and a host of first class artists entertained.

The Sandefjord choir hail from a town on the southeast coast of Norway, two hours from the capital city, Oslo. Sandefjord Male Choir is the town's oldest society, and is a traditional male choir.

This year they are celebrating their 160th anniversary, and consist of 49 singers, along with conductor, Harald J Stickler and accompanist Jon Sverre Riis.

Their repertoire was varied, consisting of national romantic compositions from the time their choir was founded, classical music, ballads and popular music.

Maesteg Gleemen Male Choir was formed in 1958 and is not only the longest established choir in the Llynfi Valley, but within the whole of the county borough of Bridgend.

Musical Director Alun Hodges and accompanist Suzanne Hodges have taken the choir from strength-to-strength, obtaining great success at eisteddfodau and travelling extensively to perform.

Their programme included items wonderfully sung like - 'What would I do without Music?', 'Pan Fyddo'r Nos yn Hir', 'Tydi a Roddaist' and 'Nessun Dorma'.

All the artists excelled themselves including violinists Macie Wallis aged 11, and Rhianwen Keirl (12) both members

of the Bridgend County Youth Orchestra, Four Counties Youth Orchestra and the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain.

Rhyddian Jenkins from Maesteg (16), a well known soloist, gained success at the Urdd Eisteddfod, the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Gwyl Cerdd Dant Festival and Dunraven Singer of the Year.

Well known harpist Angharad Roberts from Pencoed, now studying at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Cardiff, gave a wonderful performance from her chosen repertoire.

Bethan Rees proved to be an experienced and special flautist and was accompanied by Peter Richards on the piano.

Urdd Eisteddfod and National Eisteddfod of Wales winners Côr Aelwyd Porthcawl and Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sger

pupils entertained the audience with Cerdd Dant and Welsh folk.

Meinir Ann Thomas, home on a six months visit from Australia where she now lives, has enjoyed a varied career. She spent five years singing in the world renowned a cappella group, The Swingle Singers.

Meinir has worked as a freelance singer and singing teacher in London and in Sydney.

She performs as part of the duo Harp Divas in Sydney, and she has appeared and records with Cantillation, the Australian Brandenburg Choir, Halcyon, The Ten Sopranos and Eminence Orchestra. Meinir appeared as guest artist with choral societies in Wales and in Sydney.

The evening added £1,300 to the Charity Fund.

MM

Sarn burglary: police appeal

POLICE are appealing for information following a burglary on Wednesday, March 20 at Crescent Road, Sarn, between 1.30pm and 5.30pm when a quantity of jewellery and other property was stolen.

Among the items stolen were a gold Krishna statue, four gold necklaces, six gold necklaces, gold earrings, a Macbook pro computer, an iPod and a passport.

Contact South Wales Police on 101, or Crimestoppers free and anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Burglars target 92-year-old man's home

POLICE are hunting burglars who forced their way into the Pyle home of a 92-year-old man between 6pm-9.30pm on Friday (March 22) and searched first floor bedrooms.

Detective Constable Michael Maund of Bridgend CID said: "This is a disgraceful crime against a 92-year-old gentleman who was alone in his home at the time. I am appealing to anyone who has any

information about this crime to contact us. We also ask if anyone saw or heard anything unusual in the area."

Contact Bridgend CID on 01656 679518 or Crimestoppers free and anonymously on 0800 555111.

Appeal after Aberkenfig assault

POLICE are appealing for witnesses to an assault which happened in Aberkenfig during the early hours of Sunday March 10, when an 18-year-old man walking home after a night out in Bridgend, was punched in the face.

He had walked past a parked car when the occupants got out and assaulted him near the junction of Bridgend Road and Factory Terrace in Aberkenfig.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call 101, or Crimestoppers (free and anonymous) on 0800 555 111.

GEM GUEST COLUMN

'SEARCH AND RESCUE MOVE WILL GIVE BOOST TO LOCAL ECONOMY'

DO you know how far away the nearest helicopter search and rescue team is based? Earlier this week, the UK Government announced that a new £1.6bn contract for search and rescue helicopter services which will see St Athan become one of the new bases for a state of the art search and rescue fleet.

The Department for Transport has signed a contract with Bristow Helicopters Ltd to provide search and rescue helicopter services in the UK. Helicopters will be able to reach a larger area of the UK search and rescue region within one hour of take off from St Athan.

Based on historic incident data, it is estimated that there will be an overall improvement in flying times to incidents of around 20 per cent (from 23 to 19 minutes).

The AgustaWestland AW189 helicopters will fly from a new search and rescue base at St Athan, providing improved flying times and better coverage of high-risk areas across south Wales and the Bristol Channel.

Currently, approximately 70 per cent of high and very high risk areas within the UK search



by Vale of
GlamorganMP
ALUN CAIRNS

to the economy of the area.

This investment, of course, follows the good news last month that the MoD base at St Athan will become the home for the Royal Signals.

That commitment guarantees MoD funds in the area, with increased spend from soldiers through to contracts for local builders for structural projects on site.

The contract for the search and rescue service will help the local supply chain, providing and sustaining skilled jobs.

I'm certain that all these developments at St Athan will give a massive boost to the local community and wider economy of the Vale.

It will, of course, be important to work with the local community to satisfy any concerns they may have about the arrival of the search and rescue base.

On safety grounds, it must be acknowledged that this will be a major advantage for the Vale and south Wales.

There had been concerns across the south Wales coast at the loss of the base at Chivenor, but I am pleased that the Government has responded more positively than we could have hoped for and has established the search and rescue base in the Vale.

Parking and lost trade

WITH reference to The GEM article headed 'Park properly or face a £70 fine', having been in business in Porthcawl for over 50 years, starting in 1955, I think I can judge whether or not the enforcement of stringent parking restrictions will be good for anybody - it certainly sounds the death of businesses.

Coun Mike Gregory said the parking enforcement scheme will benefit visitors, businesses and residents. It is a well known fact that town centre shops are in decline, closing because of the lack of business - caused by lack of free parking.

I succeeded in my town centre shop when we had restricted, not total, on-street parking - then came the out-of-town shops and supermarkets, all with free parking as the number one priority.

Councillors go to meetings, free parking; police go to work, free parking - but residents, shopkeepers, workers, all ratepayers, pay again if they use their car parks.

It seems unfair to me. Bridgend Council have allowed about 20 licenses for taxis in Porthcawl, but only two designated pick-up points, and those are on the edge of town.

We all want a level playing field, nothing more.

Jack Bridge,
Porthcawl.



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Public Notices

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STEPHEN FLOYD
Trading as Environmental Groundworks Ltd
of
63 Highfield Place, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9RN
is applying to change an existing licence as follows:
To keep an extra 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at the operating centre at John Raymond Transport Yard, Ewenny Industrial Estate, Bridgend, CF31 3EZ
Owners or occupiers of land, (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice.
A guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

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Family Notices

DEERE William (Bill)

Suddenly on Sunday 24th March 2013 at Milsom House Nursing Home, St Athan after a long illness bravely fought. Bill, a much loved husband of Rosemary, cherished dad of Jeremy, Jamie and the late Kevin, and daughters-in-law Alison and Fatema. Dearly loved bampa to Zak, Lauren, Sam and Ian.

Bill will be greatly missed by family and friends.
Funeral Service in St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major on Wednesday, 3rd April at 12 noon followed by cremation at Coychurch Crematorium at 1.15pm. Family flowers only, but donations may be made to Parkinson's Disease Society c/o W.A. Brown & Son, College Street, Llantwit Major (cheques only please)

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
SIMON BAILEY
lots of love
Carolyn & Isla xxx

Happy Birthday
DON JOHN
on
2nd April
from all your friends at The GEM

Happy 18th Birthday
Georgia Anderson
Legal at Last!
Lots of Love from all of us
XXXXX

Thank You

THANK YOU
to the lady who found my camera in Porthcawl on Wednesday, 20th March and kindly handed it in to the ice cream kiosk.
"Faith in human nature restored"
- David Newman

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Teak Desk and Storage £50
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Bombettes blitz gutsy Gorseinon

ON a bitterly cold afternoon, Barry Bombettes faced Gorseinon in a cup quarter final.

The Barry forwards immediately took control and dominated the scrum. This domination resulted in scrum half Bannister getting quality ball to her backs with Rees and Britton to the fore.

Barry pressure resulted in a Gorseinon infringement on their 22 metre line. The Bombettes opted for a scrum and several dominant scrums and drives later, No 8 Cole powered over for a deserved short range try; the conversion was missed.

From the kick off Barry powered their way back into the visiting half and became encamped in the Gorseinon 22. Again powerful driving by the forwards resulted in the out of place but alert centre Jones was propelled over the line by prop Richards; the conversion was missed to make the score 10-0.

The Bombettes continued in the same manner at the start of the second half, playing up the slope but with the strong wind behind them. The forwards battered the Gorseinon line and this softening up was rewarded by Cole breaking for an easy touch down.

Phillips replaced Cahill, with Beare coming on for Hill.

Gorseinon, to their credit, carried on with mounting injuries, but their resistance was broken as Jones powered over for her second try. Richards' conversion made the score 22-0 and Gorseinon graciously conceded the game.
Team: Hill, Potter, Britton, K Jones (c), Rees, Bannister, O'Neill, Cole, Yapp, Williams, Garner-Joel, Boffy, Cahill, Richards, Horne. Replacements: Phillips, Beare, Major, B Jones and Kronda.

Barry woman of the match was awarded to Yapp while Gorseinon chose Cole.

The management would like to congratulate the whole team for a professional performance and a well deserved quarter final victory. The forwards laid the ground work but the whole squad take the plaudits. Special mention to our birthday girl Becky Boffy and Zara Potter and thanks, as ever, to Rachel Baron for the lovely food.

We are always looking for new players, no experience needed. We train at the Barry RFC clubhouse at 7pm on Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 7.45pm at Bryn Hafren Astro pitch.

The next match is on Sunday, April 14, kick off 2.30pm, in the semi-final of the Bowl against the winners of Croesyceiliog v Blaenau Gwent. AM

Jane and Denis win at Barrivale

LATEST results from Barrivale, March 5:
1st Jane Brook & Denis Mottram 63.89%; 2nd Mark Roderick & Mike Close 62.5%; 3rd Mick Green & Mike Best 57.64%; Jane & Denis also won on handicap.

March 12: 1st Tom Kendrick & Dave Thomas 59.03%; 2nd Mick Green & Denis Mottram and Irene Thomas & Graham Jones 57.64%; Tom & Dave also won on handicap.

New members are always welcome at Barrivale - if you would like to join us ring 01446 418380 or 01446 733425, or call at the Pioneer Hall, Beryl Road, Barry on Tuesdays at 7pm. MB

Rhod gears up for Kilimanjaro

ARCTIC chills blowing through Wales have been the ideal preparation for comedian Rhod Gilbert, as he prepares for his trek up Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of the Velindre Cancer Centre, Cardiff.

Rhod will be leading 50 intrepid trekkers, including Martyn Williams, Iolo Williams and Shan Cothi, on September 20. He was recently kitted out with his trekking gear at Cotswood Outdoors in Cardiff.

Rhod said: "I've performed in front of UK troops in Iraq, and 60,000 people at Twickenham for Help The Heroes, I've tried to make the Queen laugh with a potato, and had a pop at Prince Charles for parking outside my house at the Royal Variety Performance, but this is my toughest challenge yet."

Rhod can be sponsored at: www.justgiving.com/rhodskiltrek.

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Peugeot Partner will help to make delivery on time, whatever weather!

DELIVERY Drivers are a misundestood breed.

Imagine what their lives must be like with a never ending list of deliveries to make to various locations within a set time frame.

This is only set to increase as online shopping becomes ever more popular. Remember this demanding schedule when one pulls out in front of you without indicating.

What do these drivers do when they can't get there on time because of snow, for instance? Simple. Often appointments are missed and rescheduled at the customer's inconvenience, in my experience, with no apology and certainly no compensation.

This unhelpful and all too regular scenario is sure to have arisen many times over the recent inclement weather.

Without doubt it leads to customer disloyalty especially when dealing with businesses who demand a reliable service to prevent a knock on effect down the supply chain.

Wouldn't it, therefore, be helpful if there was a van that could handle the snow and ice? A van that is ideal for those remote parts of England or even the Highlands of Scotland.

Well, I am pleased to report that there is in the form of the new Peugeot Partner all-terrain van, which is fitted with an indispensable grip control.

This dial found to the left of the steering wheel allows the driver to select the appropriate mode for the conditions and responds accordingly.

But I notice that this grip control falls back to its original setting when the engine is switched off so the driver needs to remember this when they set off again.

My test takes place as Britain emerges from a heavy snowfall and rain turns to ice. Needless to say that it remains in ice and snow mode for the duration of the test.

MOTORING with TIM SAUNDERS



The Peugeot Partner SE HDi 92

There's also an ASR (anti-slip regulation) providing further sure-footedness. It makes light work of manoeuvring out of an ice covered car park while other vehicles remain stranded.

With its extra 10mm height over a normal Partner van the driver of this all-terrain model enjoys a good view of the road ahead.

It feels competent on the motorway with only a mere hint of buffeting. The upgraded 195/70 R15 tyres, specifically for mud and snow, give the driver added confidence that they will make their deliveries on time.

Parkers, the car experts, say: "Peugeot's Partner is a versatile and capable city van, aimed at small businesses in need of something dependable and easy to live with."

"It's built alongside the Citroen Berlingo and the two siblings rival each other at the top of the class. The trusty companion ticks all the right boxes, with some clever tricks, a hugely versatile model line-up (buyers have the pick of three engines, three payloads and two body lengths) and competitive list prices. As a result, Partner is one of the most tempting small vans on sale in the UK."

The other striking feature of this van is that it has three seats in the cabin. This opens up the possibility of my wife and daughter in her baby seat travelling in the van, too.

Forward facing child seats can be used in the front of vans but it is necessary to consult the handbook to check how far the airbag inflates.

There is no problem with placing Harriett in the middle seat because there is no airbag in the centre of the dash.

She loves it but we have to ensure that she does not change gear while daddy is driving. I then have to make sure the van's seat is as far back from the dashboard as possible.

It is almost a bench seat, but not quite because there is a slight gap between the driver's seat and the two passenger seats, to make room for the handbrake.

When three are travelling it's relatively comfortable but snug. It is helpful that the stereo controls are also mounted on the steering column helping the driver to remain focused on the road ahead. Economical, it will travel over 500 miles on a tank if driven sensibly and there is a sizeable amount of room in the wood-lined rear for transporting goods as you can see from the video at testdrives.biz.

Delivery drivers will appreciate the fact that the useful sliding side door and double rear doors automatically lock when the ignition is turned. This does give peace of mind. There are plenty of cubby holes in the cabin and places to slot drinks, too.

This well-designed, agile and easy to drive van, could also appeal to carpenters and builders.

Peugeot Partner SE HDi 92.

OTR price: £14,015. 1.6-litre diesel 0-60mph: 14.1secs.

Top speed: 99mph.

Kerb weight: 1,315kg.

Length: 4,628mm.

Width: 2,112mm.

Height: 1,834mm.

Watch the video at: www.testdrives.biz.

Students pass their grading test



Pictured with their instructors and grading examiners are the successful candidates.

RECENTLY, the Cadroxton Schools of Tae Kwon Do held their first colour belt grading of the year at the Victoria Park Community Centre.

The grading saw 27 students from as young as five sitting the test, which was conducted by master Ron Thomas (8th Dan) with Jamie Halford (4th Dan) and assisted by Anita Sheppard (1st Dan).

All 27 students passed their grading, and three achieved top grade A passes. These were Ben Phillips, Katie Watkins and the winner of the grading shield, Cian Allen.

Successful candidates were:

Promoted to 10a orange stripe - Thea Cunningham and Fae Hillberg.

Promoted to 9th kup orange belt - Camron Hales, Lucia Cunningham.

Promoted to 8th kup yellow belt - Katie Watkins, Martin James, Angel Sharp, Ben Phillips and Kurtis James.

Promoted to 7th kup green stripe - Jason Blackley.

Promoted to 6th kup green belt - Thomas Pugh, Joel Wells and Emily Halford.

Promoted to 5th kup blue stripe - Cody Jacobsen, Jake Quigley and Evan Baron.

Promoted to 4th kup blue belt - Daniel Quigley, Demi Baker and Cian Allen.

Promoted to 2nd kup red belt - Alan Evans, Gabrielle Thorne and Ryan Thorne.

Promoted to 1st kup black stripe - Jasmine Sullivan, Shannon Haysham, Oliver Tipples, Thomas and Molly Shivers.

For further information, telephone 01446 406372 or see www.taekwondoassociationeurope.co.uk.

RT

Cowbridge RFC beat Penygraig by a whisker!

THE Millenium Stadium one week, Penygraig the next.

Two stands, no roof, surrounded by beautiful snow covered mountains and a pitch like an uncooked Christmas pudding - welcome back to Division 4 South East. With still nine games to play it was no surprise that despite the reservations of the referee both captains agreed to go ahead with the game.

Considering the glum conditions both sides were prepared to run the ball from the off and Penygraig had the first scoring opportunity after three minutes, hitting the post from a penalty.

Cowbridge showed

great enterprise with the ball in hand with a storming run by No 8 Ryan Hall and deft footwork by wing Jamie Picton-Turberville and this all paid off after 20 minutes with a fine try by outside half Carwyn Morgan following some great interplay between forwards and backs.

Morgan added the points with the conversion.

Cowbridge kept up the pressure with some good running from full back Richie Howson and centres Luke Boys and Elia Pellegrotti.

Just before half time a great charge down by flanker Matt Logsdon resulted in a Cowbridge penalty that was just wide.

Cowbridge continued the good work at the start of the second half with hooker Rhys Price providing some charging kicks and rushes up the pitch and it didn't take long before they were back on the scoreboard.

With crunching tackles by Boys and prop Dai Popham keeping Penygraig on the back foot it was another storming run by Hall that took Cowbridge up to the home side's 22 and the ball was spun out to Pellegrotti to sprint over for Cowbridge's second try.

Cowbridge then seemed to lose their way a little and despite their lowly position in the league, the Penygraig pack started to dominate as Cowbridge began to leak penalties.

It was a lineup from one of these penalties that provided Penygraig with their first try as they barged over the line after 20 minutes, failing to convert.

It was the pack that again provided Penygraig with their second try as their No 8 picked up and drove

over. Penygraig continued the pressure but with just a few minutes to go a tremendous Cowbridge drive from a Penygraig lineup and two massive scrums when Cowbridge more than held their own took us to the final whistle and a very relieved Cowbridge team.

Final score: Penygraig 10 Cowbridge 12.

This was an exhausting game and credit to both sides for giving it their all.

Cowbridge held out with some ferocious tackling and great belief up front despite great pressure in the second half. Well done boys in terrible conditions.

This was just the fourth game this year and fixture secretary Nick Jones has been working hard rearranging the backlog of fixtures.

There are still eight league games to play as follows: this Saturday we welcome Old Illydians to the Athletic ground, and then on Wednesday, April 3 we're again at home against Wattstown (kick off 6.30pm) followed by Abercwmboi away on April 6, Llandaff North on April 13 at home, Llantwit Major on April 20 away, Llandaff away on April 27, Llantwit at home on Wednesday, May 1 (kick off 6.30pm) and finally Pontycymmer at home to be decided on May 7/8/9.

This should be an exciting run-in to the end of the season with still lots to play for in a tight league, so come along and support the boys.

RV/RK

Manchester United football school coaches young Llantwit stars



SIX of Llantwit Major Schools' budding year 8 footballers spent the weekend being coached by some of the best coaches in the world at a Manchester United Soccer School weekend.

The boys spent two days working on their

football skills and picking up tips on how to improve their game.

Sam Snaith and Ben Boyd both were recognised as potential star players and received recognition by their coach.

As a result Llantwit Major School is in the running to be invited to Manchester United's Champions day, where

the school football squad would visit Old Trafford and play in a champion's tournament; fingers crossed we are selected! Well done boys!

Pupils who attended were Ben Boyd, Sam Snaith, Joe Baker, Chris Davies, Rhys Richards and James Harries.

SL

WHAT'S ON - in brief

Live Music

ON Saturday, April 6 (Easter weekend), Llantwit Major RFC will be the venue for Live Lounge, a night dedicated to live music, being held to raise funds for the club itself and Marie Curie Cancer Support.

Live music from 4th Street Traffic, official support act to the Stereophonics and Manic Street Preachers.

They are also the headline band for Wales' RBS Six Nations 2013 campaign. Tickets £6 available at Llantwit

Major RFC.

Dog walks

KENFIG nature reserve is promoting responsible dog walking by bringing friendly dogs and owners together for a Tuesday socialising walk, taken by Claire Richardson, from Bark and Ride dog walking, day care and training.

She is on hand to answer questions and give advice where needed from 1.30 pm. Contact Claire Richardson on 07792 980 366 for more details.

Vale golf juniors triumph in Spain

THE Vale Resort's junior golf team is celebrating its latest success after taking joint first place at the Junior Team Golf Home Nations Inter Club Championships in Antequera, Spain.

The team, captained by Callum Yorston (17) from Hensol and made up of Delon Hau (18) from Tonyrefail, Ryan Thomas (18) from Cardiff, Tim Harry (15) from Dinas Powys, Harrie Llewellyn (15) from Whitchurch, Mathew Rees (15) from Bridgend, Ollie Lloyd (17) from Miskin, and Ollie Brown (14) from Peterson-super-Ely, went head-to-head with the best junior teams from the UK.

A tense week of golf played in poor weather conditions resulted in a first place tie between the Vale Resort and St Pierre, Chepstow, the first time in the competition's 19-year history that a Welsh team has made it to the final.

Clive Coombs, the Vale Resort's golf operations manager, said: "Yet again, the junior team have done themselves and the Vale Resort proud. They played



The Vale Juniors with Graeme Vorston of the Principality (left) and Stephen Leeke of the Vale Resort.

some brilliant golf and conducted themselves like true sports men and women throughout the competition.

"The fact that a Welsh team has never even made it to the final of this competition before, let alone won, shows that the investment the Vale Resort has put into nurturing up-and-coming golfing talent through our golf academy is certainly paying off.

"We are also lucky to have dedicated people who have put many

hours into working with the team, and some very generous sponsors, without whom this trip would not have been possible."

Team captain Callum Yorston said: "I was honoured to be captain of such an inspiring team who gave their all in difficult conditions. Bringing the trophy home to Wales makes this one of the best weeks of our lives."

The Vale's junior team is sponsored by the Principality Building Society, which is strongly committed to supporting grass roots sport in

Wales.

As part of its commitment to supporting the golfing stars of the future, the Vale currently offers a special Junior golfing package. Open to young people aged between 8 - 18 years, it includes free access to the Vale's academy coaching scheme, a copy of the academy's coaching manual and more than 50 per cent off junior membership for the first year.

For more information on the programme, please visit www.vale-hotel.com/golf.

More praise for Bryn!

TREDODRIDGE'S Bryn Palling, featured in last week's GEM and whose racing yard is up for sale following his recent retirement, has come in for more praise.

Derek and Jean Clee, who had horses with top trainers Sir Henry Cecil, Richard Hannon and Mike Channon, moved to Wales in 1999 and were looking for a local trainer, in addition to other trainers.

They said: "When we discovered Bryn and Marge's yard, we found it warm and friendly and we soon realised we were joining a large family. "We were always

made welcome at any time, not just by Bryn and his wife Marge but by the numerous other owners who always seemed to be present.

It seemed that every owner shared in each other's triumphs and expectations, and with endless cups of tea and biscuits from Marge, we had numerous hours of pleasure. In total, Bryn trained 15 winners for us."

Paul Young, an owner with Bryn for 25 years and who had shares in 46 of the many winners Bryn saddled over the years, including the prolific *Carrania*, said: "What I liked about Bryn and Marge was that they made everyone welcome. We were treated the same

whether we had a 10 per cent share in a horse or whether we were the sole owners of three or four."

TIMEFORM HORSES TO FOLLOW

Flat race enthusiasts will want to avail themselves of *Timeform Horses To Follow* (published by Timeform Limited, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 1XF at £9.95).

There are 50 horses to follow, the big name interviews, future stars, trainers for courses and much, much more.

Look out for Sir Michael Stoute's *Telescope* as he '... has the potential to develop into one of the stars of the season.'

RACING AT LLYSWORNEY
I have before me a racecard for the Ely Valley Horse And Pony Racing Club horse race meeting at

Llysworney (Nr Cowbridge) for July 5, 1986.

The big event was 'The Grand Mile' with a first prize of £1,000. The marked racecard informs us that this was won by *Alpha*, a nine-year-old gelding owned by Mr G Griffiths of Gilfach Goch, and the formguide tells us that *Alpha* was 'a winner in Scotland and Cowbridge last week.'

Little Saint, owned by L Rogers of Llangeinor, won £150 for finishing second and the third prize of £50 went to *The Rose*, owned by Mr C Bridge of Tonyrefail.

If you have any memories, photographs or anecdotes of these now vanished flapping meetings which were held in the Vale, or any other places for that matter, then I would be delighted to hear from you.

You can e-mail your news or views to Brian Lee at brianlee4@virgin-media.com or phone him on 02920736438.

BRIAN LEE

Atoms surge to double victory

BARRY Atoms played two games on the weekend.

The first game was played against Whitchurch, and quite frankly the score could have been a lot more except for a disallowed try, a knock forward and a few other mistakes.

The Atoms went three tries up through J.Couch, D.Griffiths and I.Escott and the unselfish team work was a joy to behold.

Whitchurch started the second half with a try and were making a right battle of this, but with another try finished off by R.Robinson we knew this game was really over.

Whitchurch grounded off a consolation try to make final score 4-2 to the Atoms. Next we were treated to visiting English touring side St.Thomas'. We did wonder what level they would play at as they came with a good

reputation, being a prep school side.

We were again treated to an Atoms performance that really did take them to another level. In such conditions the determination to win was immense and so pleasing to see these kids play as a unit. St.Thomas were technically very good and strong. We simply had too much for them and would have given anybody a run for their money in this form.

Great tries from Z.Fifield, D.Griffiths (2) and R.Robinson put them to the sword. Final score Atoms 4, St.Thomas' 0.

A little mention to another new player, playing his first ever game - Kaiden Jones, well done

Squad: D.Wall, I.Escott, R.Rendell, D.Griffiths, F.Giosanu, T.Mort, Z.Fifield, J.Brown, R.Robinson, C.Couch, C.Macarthur, C.Denbury, J.Long, K.Jones.

DD

Cowbridge under-14s pipped at post

COWBRIDGE under-14s were pipped at the post yet again as Bridgend Sports scored a late try to rob Cowbridge of what would have been a well deserved draw.

The home side were rampant in the first 15 minutes, scoring three tries through Dewi Bennett, Dan Bunney and Sam Palmer, with two conversions by outside half Cai Evans giving Cowbridge a 19 point lead.

Through penalty kicks, the visitors began to lay siege to the Cowbridge line, scoring two converted tries to reduce the margin to only five points.

Cowbridge continued

to concede penalties in the second half and it came as no surprise when Bridgend scored an unconverted try to level the scores.

The final five minutes were played in bad spirit as the home team players became more and more frustrated with the continuing number of penalties being inflicted on them, which resulted in a red card for a Cowbridge player.

Bridgend took advantage of playing against 14 men to score the final try, winning the game 26-19.

Prominent for Cowbridge in the backs were Joe Nott, Sean Davies and Charlie Pegrum, with Will Couzins, Matthew Keating and Duncan Ace the pick of the forwards.

AD

Steeplechases rearranged

THE Glamorgan Hunt Steeplechases due last Saturday (March 23) at Ystradowen have been rearranged and will now be staged on Saturday, April 6 - first race at 2pm.

The weather played havoc last weekend resulting in the cancellation of most point to points nationwide and even the professional racing at Newbury, Doncaster and Stratford

were lost to the elements.

The Monmouthshire Hunt fixture due this Saturday at Llanvapley has been cancelled due to the poor ground conditions.

The Ystradowen meeting will stage six exciting steeplechases with sideshows, trade-stands, caterers and bars available for the visiting public.

Admission is car and driver £10, then £5 per adult - children under 16 free.

PT

CANOE TEST

A NON-STOP 125 mile canoe race with 77 portages is not the most relaxing way to spend Easter weekend - but then Vale adventure athlete Maria Leijerstam doesn't believe in an easy life.

Maria and race partner Neal Fletcher, past chairman of Cardiff Canoe Club, are taking part in the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race over the Easter weekend, where they are aiming for a place in the top three in their category.

The race is a severe test of skill and stamina as to negotiate the locks they will have to get out of their boat a total of 77 times and carry it for up to a mile at a time.

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Welsh disability championships are in Cardiff

THE Rotary Welsh Schools Disability Championships South Wales Final took place on March 20 at Sport Wales National Centre, in Sophia Gardens, Cardiff.

164 gymnasts competed on the day, with foundation phase and key stage 2 children competing in the morning and key stage 3 and 4 children performing in the afternoon.

The competition's finalists were selected from one of seven

regional rounds held across the country - competitors in the south final came from all over the south Wales region including Bridgend and the Vale.

Disability Sport Wales chief executive Jon Morgan explained how important it was for sporting governing bodies to have an inclusive approach to disability sport: "It's a perfect example of an inclusive approach of a governing body in Wales and it's more of this that we want to see across the whole of the Welsh sporting landscape."

Pontyclun club bowling along nicely!

PONTYCLUN Bowls Club was set up in 1932 and is a strong village-based club under the umbrella of Pontyclun Athletic Club.

As well as being able to look back proudly at its heritage, the club is looking forward to the 2013 season with excitement and is delighted to be one of those selected to play in the inaugural season of the new South Glamorgan County Bowling Association league.

In addition to the new league, Pontyclun teams take part in leagues organised by the Rhondda Borough Bowling Association, Taff Ely Bowling Association, and the Alliance.

On most Saturdays during the season, it fields two sides in the East Wales Private Greens league, which includes many of the top clubs in Barry, Penarth, Cardiff and the valleys.

Pontyclun BC is home to established competitive bowlers at club, county and international levels and also has a core of social bowlers, all supported by a com-

mitted coaching team. The club's broad base is also reflected in the age range of players, which spans from early teens to seventies and beyond.

If you'd like to learn more about bowls in a traditional village-based club, take a look at our website: www.pontyclunbowlsclub.co.com.

The club is holding a series of open evenings at 6pm on April 19 and 26, May 3 and 10. Our coaching team will be on hand to offer help and advice and can provide all the kit that you'll need to get started. If you'd like to come along to an open evening, we'd like to see you.

Beryl Smith (01443) 224096 and Avril Davies (01443) 222260, are happy to provide information on ladies bowls in Pontyclun. Pontyclun Ladies Bowls Club is also an integral part of Pontyclun Athletic Club, located in the heart of the village.

GJT

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GEM sport

LEWIS' LAST-GASP DROP GOAL SECURES WIN FOR ATHLETIC

WHEREAS Bridgend Athletic had lost their last fixture with a last gasp drop goal by Llanharan, this time the boot was on the other foot as outside half Steve Lewis repeated the feat with the last kick of the game to defeat Narbeth 16-15.

This was the first drop goal of the season for the Athletic and only the fifth in four seasons. Lewis had managed two in 2010, Carle Ellis one in 2011 and Corey Butler another in 2012.

Perhaps it is a string the Athletic should add more often to their bow – especially in tight Championship games when try scoring is difficult.

Bridgend bridge club

THE results for Bridgend Bridge Club for recent events are:

Wednesday, March 20: first Dave Barwood and Wendy Williams, second Andrew Scott and Liam Sheridan, third Linda Pinnock and Denis Mottram.

Friday, March 22, North South: first Mary Moore and Jane Brook, second Bill Turner and John Raymond, third Liam Sheridan and Alan Williams. East West: first John Henson and Ann Fox, second Irene Thomas and David Newman, third Gordon Burlison and Norma Newman.

The Otters started the game at speed and had virtually all the possession in the opening four minutes, culminating in a try for flanker Wayne Williams from a drive at a five-metre line out.

During this period, as against Llanharan, the Athletic had conceded unnecessary penalties. Captain Simon Mustoe gathered his troops behind the posts and read them the riot act to buck up their efforts, and this had the desired effect.

A period of Athletic pressure led to a penalty converted by Steve Lewis. The Athletic continued on the front foot and forced a five-metre scrum when full back Laurence Howley was denied a touchdown as Narbeth carried the ball over their own try line.

From the resultant scrum No 8 Sean Derrick picked up and was halted

just short of the line. The Athletic laid siege to the try line with a number of pick up and goes, finally leading to hooker Mustoe being driven over the whitewash in the corner. Lewis converted with an excellent kick to put the Athletic 10-5 ahead.

Athletic centre James Olds was yellow carded for side entry at a ruck and James Russel kicked the resultant penalty to reduce his side's deficit to 10-8.

The Athletic monopolised possession during the centre's 10 minutes enforced absence, with excellent controlled play in difficult muddy conditions.

On the stroke of half time they were rewarded when Lewis kicked his second penalty to give the Athletic a 13-8 half time lead.

The Athletic had enjoyed a first half wind advantage. However, this picked up in the second period, making kicking out of defence difficult.

The Athletic 8 took it upon themselves to monopolise possession and deny the Otters clear attacking opportunities.

During this period, the back row of Sean Derrick, Sean Williams and Ben Thomas and scrum half Aled Thomas were immense. Williams and Derrick carried well and the Thomas boys

hassled the Narbeth side into errors.

Scrum half Aled gave his opposite number a nightmare, continually catching him in possession and preventing the ball getting out to the Narbeth backs. When it did get out, centres Olds and Michael Hathaway were quickly up on their centres, stopping them in their tracks.

Lock Griff Davies and prop Rod Apsee and hooker Mustoe were continually probing the Otters' defence with their ball carrying. Defences had been solid throughout, with both sides playing difficult conditions by keeping the ball tight.

However, with five minutes left, Narbeth launched a long kick down into the Athletic 22 and a period of pressure led to a penalty.

Outside half James Stephenson took it quickly and crossed for a try to level the scores. Russel added the conversion to put the Otters ahead and seemingly heading for only their second victory at Newbridge Fields.

The Athletic were not about to see their hard work go unrewarded and from the restart went hell for leather at the Otters defence. They became encamped inside the 22 and after a series of forward drives at the line

were unsuccessful, outside half Steve Lewis sat back in the pocket.

Thomas fed him from a ruck and, despite a charge at him by three defenders, he managed a low trajectory drop goal that sealed the victory. He was mobbed by delighted teammates as the referee blew the final whistle with no time to restart play.

The whole side, including wings Nick Hinton and debutant William Williams, prop Huw Morris, lock Jamie Doherty and replacements Nathan Holman, Matt Muir, Callum McCleod and permit player Sean O'Rourke, can be pleased with their gutsy performance and team spirit that finally carried the day.

REMAINING FIRST XV FIXTURES:

March 30, Tata Steel – away; April 6, Ebbw Vale – home, South Wales Police ground; April 13, Newbridge – away; April 17, Pontypool – home, kick off 7.15pm, South Wales Police ground; April 20, Blackwood – home, Newbridge Fields; April 24, Tata Steel – home, kick off 6.30pm, Newbridge Fields; April 27, Llanharan – away; May 4, Bonymaen – away.

ADRIAN BURT

Athletic Youth triumph in miserable conditions

BRIDGEND Athletic Youth were delighted to be able to welcome Waunardlydd Youth to Newbridge Fields for the first league game of the 2013 season.

Heavy overnight rain meant a considerable amount of ground work was required to allow the game to proceed, and also that an open running game was unlikely.

This indeed proved to be the case and the game started as a forward dominated affair with Bridgend Athletic coming out on top in the early exchanges, particularly in the scrums where George Carter, Jake Lewis and Zac Evans were immense.

The Athletic also used the rolling maul to excellent effect and it was this tactic that led to the game's first try after 10 minutes when the Athletic pushed their opposition a full 20 metres to allow front row forward George Carter to touch down.

The try was converted by Scott Jones to bring the score to 7 – 0 to Bridgend Athletic.

The visitors attempted to spread the ball at every opportunity but the Athletic defence showed no signs of cracking, however, with excellent work from centres Chris Price and Tom Jenkins and the back three of Josh Seldon, Chris Walker and Matthew Wilson.

The Athletic kept up the forward

pressure in the set pieces and the loose and a powerful run from the back of another rolling maul led to their second try on the stroke of half time, scored by number eight Rory Thomas. The try went unconverted to bring the half time score to 12 – 0 to the Athletic.

From the start of the second half Waunardlydd used the very strong wind at their backs to excellent effect with their number 10 pinning the Athletic in their own half for significant periods.

Only brave Athletic defence kept the visitors out on a number of occasions and it was clear this determined visiting team had not given up.

Indeed, continued pressure from the Waunardlydd backs eventually led to their first try with some 9 minutes remaining which was converted to bring the score to 12 – 7 to Bridgend Athletic.

The Athletic dug in from the restart to ensure there were no further scores and saw the match out to the end for a hard worked win.

This excellent win in poor conditions should give the Athletic youth a much needed boost for the remainder of the league programme and hopefully they can go on to greater things.

MF

Lichaba dreams of the World Championships

ON Saturday, March 9, 18-year-old Dinas Powys resident, Lichaba West, lined up at the starting blocks in the race of his life so far – representing his country of birth, Lesotho, in the African Continental Mountain Bike Championships.

For Lichaba, this was the fulfilment of one of his goals on the way to representing the tiny African nation, which has links with Wales, in the World Championships, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games.

Lichaba is the son of Mark West, who left Dinas Powys for missionary work in Lesotho over 20 years ago.

Lichaba is the grandson of Brian and Pat West, who still live at Hebron Hall. Brian and Pat are well known for their work in transforming Bryn-Y-Don into Hebron Hall Christian Centre and residential home for the elderly.

Lichaba now lives with his grandparents while studying for his Welsh Baccalaureate at St. Cyres School, Penarth.

The African Continental Mountain Bike Championships were held in the town of Pietermaritzburg in South Africa, and featured teams from all over Africa.

Lichaba raced very well in the junior (under-18) category of the XCO Cross-Country event.

The competition was very tough, especially from the South African team with home advantage.

The course was also tricky – it will be used for World Mountain Bike Championships later this year – and the drizzling rain made it all the more challenging. Lichaba finished a credible 20th position overall.

Lichaba's trip was made possible thanks to the generous support of local and Lesotho people, in particular the Penarth and District Lesotho Trust that seeks to build friendship links between Penarth in the Vale and schools, churches and communities in Lesotho.

Now back in Dinas Powys, Lichaba's next focus will be the Welsh XC Mountain Bike Series and Welsh Championships in May, riding for the local Cardiff Jif cycling club.



Lichaba centre with (left) dad Mark, and the President of the Confederation of African Cycling Dr Wagih Azzam.

Then he hopes to return to South Africa in August for the World Championships – the first time that Lesotho will be represented at worlds.

MW Below, Lichaba's cousin, Rebekah West, aged 13, reports on his progress in Welsh cycling competitions.

As a junior rider, Lichaba's world ranking is 42nd out of 192. During his time in Wales he has competed in the Welsh Mountain Bike Championship in Coed y Brenin, north Wales last year, which was his first encounter with the Welsh terrain and weather, then some endurance races.

This year he has competed in the Welsh Cross Country Series at Margam Park, Port Talbot and Buith Wells, mid-Wales.

During the winter Lichaba tried his hand at Cyclo cross which he has not done before.

He explained: "I found it hard work using my mountain bike with fat tyres when everyone else was on skinny tyres. Not really the right bike to use but it's the only one I've got."

Mountain biking in Wales is a whole new challenge, having to train and compete in the freeze-

ing cold, wet and extremely muddy conditions.

It is a far cry from Lesotho – just stepping outside into the ideal conditions nearly every day.

Lichaba said: "It is something that I have to persevere with if I want to achieve my potential here."

"2013 is my last year in the junior category and I want to make it count with a good performance here and in the World Championships in South Africa."

"This is really an opportunity not to be missed as I can pick up some ranking points in these events."

As Lichaba's parents are missionaries their limited budget does not allow for long haul flights with a bike in tow.

He is hoping that there are some good-hearted sponsors, benefactors or philanthropists who would like to help.

The cost of flights is around £630 with Virgin Atlantic, which allows bicycles to be taken as sporting luggage free within 23kg.

If someone would like to help Lichaba realise his dream, Brian and Pat, his grandparents in Dinas Powys, can be contacted at the following email address:

westhouse.west2@gmail.com.

Chess league

IN division 2 of the East Glamorgan chess league, bottom placed Pontypridd beat Bridgend A 3-2.

Bridgend's top boards did well with Peter Ballantyne on board 1 holding Dia James to a draw and Mike Kearn on 2 winning against Roy Thomas, with Robert Rees on 3 drawing with Callum Harris.

However, the Ponty players were the stronger on boards 4 and 5 where Jonathan Edwards, on 4 against Roger Jenkins, and James Williams, on 5 against Sam Jukes, both lost.

For more information on Bridgend chess visit www.bridgendchessclub.com.

MK

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